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CHRIST AND CIVILIZATION

A SURVEY OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION UPON THE COURSE OF CIVILIZATION

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Edited for the
National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches
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Preface

WHILE such classics as Plato's *Republic* and More's *Utopia* show that the problem of society has engaged the world's great thinkers in former times; yet it may be truly said that no previous age was so much occupied with social questions as the present. From this widespread and still growing interest the Christian Churches cannot stand aloof; and the record of the function of Christianity in history sketched in the volume justifies the conviction that they ought not. The Christian Church has in the past exerted a profound moral influence on society, and has brought about far-reaching changes in social conditions. This series of essays, each of which is written by a scholar specially qualified by his previous studies for the task he has undertaken, aims at exhibiting not only the principles which from time to time have found recognition as constituting the Christian Ideal of Society, but also the methods by which that Ideal has been partially realized under varying circumstances. It is hoped that in fulfilling this purpose the volume will not only suggest changes which are to-day desirable, but also means of bringing those about which are practicable.

In the Introduction the Modern Social Problem

is presented as a summons to the Christian Churches to think and work out its solution. As the roots of Christianity are in Judaism, the first chapter sketches the Social Ideals in the Old Testament. The second chapter shows how the Christian Ideal was revealed in Jesus. Since at a very early stage in its history the Christian Church found an entrance into the Græco-Roman World, the preparation for the reception of the Gospel engages attention in the third chapter. How far this Christian ideal was realized in the Primitive Church the fourth chapter seeks to prove. Within three centuries the Christian Church spread throughout the Roman Empire; by what means the fifth chapter inquires. How the Roman Empire was influenced by the Christian Church is discussed in the sixth chapter. After the fall of the Roman Empire the Church transmitted its bequest of civilization to the new nations then formed. The seventh chapter exhibits the Influence of the Christian Church on Social and Ethical Development during the Middle Ages. While the Reformation was primarily religious, yet it formulated social principles, and had social effects; and both these are described in the eighth chapter. After the Reformation the most important event for the Protestant Churches of Great Britain was the Evangelical Revival in the eighteenth century. How this was the inspiration of the philanthropy which marked the beginning of the nineteenth century the ninth chapter demonstrates. So important has been the influence of the French Revolution

on modern social theories that the tenth chapter has been devoted to this subject. In no modern enterprise of the Christian Church to-day is its social influence so fully or clearly illustrated as in Foreign Missions; the proof of this is given in the eleventh chapter. As the Christian Church can effect its social mission only in co-operation with other factors of human progress, it seemed necessary for the purpose of the volume that the last chapter should give some account of modern scientific and philosophical thought regarding human society. May this record of the past awaken an interest, and spur on to an effort in the present, which will make the Christian Church of the future a more constant and potent force for the good of human society than it has ever yet been!

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Introduction

THE MODERN SOCIAL PROBLEM

By the Rev. J. SCOTT LIDGETT, M.A., D.D., Warden of the Bermondsey Settlement, Ex-President of the National Free Church Council.

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Introduction

THE MODERN SOCIAL PROBLEM

THE aim of this volume, though primarily historical, is above all practical. It sets forth the nature and growth of great social ideals, which were fulfilled in Christ, and thereby for ever included both in the content of His religion and in the commission of His Church. It traces the working of these ideals and the way by which they passed from being merely the spiritual heritage of the Church into motive forces playing a great part in moulding and transforming Western civilization. The reason, however, of this attempt to represent historic facts is rather to provide guidance for the future than to encourage satisfaction with the past.

For many reasons such satisfaction would be out of place. Leaving out of account for the moment our existing social evils, which are deeply rooted in the past, it is undeniable that Christ's ideals have been but imperfectly apprehended even by the best of His followers, and have been largely misconceived by the majority. The endeavour faithfully to apply even the imperfect apprehension of them to the life of the Church itself has only for brief periods been strenuous and has often failed altogether. Any sustained at-

tempt to base civilization in its entirety upon them has yet to come into existence. The downward drag of human inertia and the clash of selfish interests within the Church have often led to almost flat contradiction of the precepts of Christ, and to complete denial of His Spirit. The vindication of Christ—though it should be offered as a tribute and not as a defence—can only be, taking history as a whole, by the condemnation, always of the limitations and often of the infidelity of His Church. Such vindication will take the form of showing the permanent sufficiency of the ideals which Christ revealed, or to which He gave the sanction of His authority, of describing their sustained influence upon mankind throughout the ages and, above all, at seasons of spiritual revival, and of demonstrating from the transforming and uplifting results of their partial application that all that is required for the redemption of mankind is that they should be embraced with such faith and devotion as will give them full play.

Hence what is mainly required is a clear and convincing indication of the social meaning and the normal effects of the Christian religion. Such an indication will be largely given by the two inductive methods of difference and of concomitant variations. That is to say it will exhibit the normal effects upon civilization exerted by the introduction of the Christian religion, and will show that human and civil well-being have varied directly as the faith of Christ has been truly embraced and resolutely applied to the problems and tasks of human society. The most beneficent effect of such an endeavour will be to supply an incentive for the future: for the verification of Christianity, at least on its practical side, must lie in its complete realization and in its full application to

human affairs. Hence the present investigation of the influence of Christianity upon the evolution of civilization is intended so to illustrate its principles and to reveal its relations to human nature and progress, as to supply inspiration and guidance for a vast task that is quite obviously incomplete.

The claim is made that the religion of Christ is the absolute religion. Yet it is absolute, not as a creation out of nothing, but as the fulfilment of the Old Testament religion out of which it sprang, and through which it stands connected, as well as contrasted, with the other religions of mankind. Now the distinctive mark of Old Testament religion was that it offered to faith the prospect and assurance of a supreme historic end which should satisfy every power, meet every need, and idealize every relationship of mankind. That end is the Kingdom of God ; not only His sovereign gift, but His spiritual manifestation within the whole realm of human, and even natural, existence. The advent of this kingdom was represented as necessary to satisfy, not so much the material cravings, as the spiritual demands which the religion of Jehovah had itself created in the heart of His people. The promise of the Kingdom of God affirmed the worth, and suggested the permanence of personal existence. It declared the sacredness of human society, morally ordered and spiritually inspired. It founded the social order in God and set forth its perfecting as the final act of God and the characteristic hope of true religion. Hence inevitably the consummation, divinely promised, became the ideal of human effort and the test, as the prophets insisted, of human character. The spirituality of Christ led to the fusing of the Apocalyptic and the moral elements of the Old Testament in a perfect whole. Neither element can

be ignored. The union between them is not always apparent in the Gospel narratives as they stand. It must be found in our Lord's treatment of the Fatherhood of God and of the sonship of men, and in the truth, contained therein, that the recreative activity of God begins in the character and influence of His children. Hence as crude Apocalyptic hopes passed away from the Christian Church, the earnest of the true Apocalypse began to appear in more far-reaching social endeavour. This volume will show how far-reaching such endeavour became, how it reappeared in every phase of Christian development, and how its principles worked even in movements, like the French Revolution, which were ostensibly a revolt against organized—but in reality travestied—Christianity.

The vital question, however, remains. What forces can the religion of Christ bring to bear upon the Social Problem of to-day? Every age involves a crisis for civilization, for the gains of the past can only be preserved by the continued advance of the present. Yet in some respects the present crisis is unique, both by reason of the demands it makes and equally by reason of the new means of meeting them. On the one hand is the extent and intimacy of our world-relations, which are fast making humanity to stand, not merely for a common nature, but for a Commonwealth. In addition, there is the vast development of our industrial system, with all the moral, economic, and physical problems involved in it. Accompanying this development is the colossal and cosmopolitan organization of financial power that is almost impersonal—that certainly either claims to be or submits to become devoid of those restraining and guiding influences which moral personality stands for. If these elements in combination give unique gravity

to the problem of modern civilization, on the other hand the present age has unique powers of dealing with it. Democracy has come into being, a deeper sympathy is everywhere at war with inherited and vulgar callousness, while the advance of science is every day increasing the resources available for humane sympathy, when it becomes a democratic purpose. The practical object of this volume will best be served, therefore, by examining at the outset the challenge which the modern Social Problem offers to Christianity.

In what has already been said it is implied that so far from the social problem having been solved in the past—whether by the Christian religion or by other means—its full nature and dimensions are only now for the first time in human history becoming manifest. Particular evils have been overcome. But the development of human life in modern times, although on the whole it has meant real progress, has been attended by serious drawbacks and has given rise to a multitude of incidental evils that are not the less dangerous or evil, because they may be treated as incidental. Moreover, the standards of society—whether political, economic, or social—in so-called Christian countries have never made and do not now make any pretence of being completely Christian. This is not merely a complaint on the part of those who take the Christian religion seriously. The average opinion of the present day pronounces the religion of the Sermon on the Mount to be an impracticable ideal and holds that any attempt systematically to apply it would be attended by almost fatal disaster. So long as this state of mind prevails convinced and consistent Christians can find little satisfaction in the social condition of the age, and will draw the inference that great as

has been the influence of Christ it is destined to become greater and more far-reaching in the future. The Christian view of the world, while not optimist as to any particular stage of historic development, is profoundly so as to the ultimate possibilities, nay certainties, as it regards them. The Christian believer is conscious of spiritual forces within himself and the Church, which would quickly transform the world if they had full play and became universal. Further, he is profoundly convinced that the nature of the universe is so constituted and its course so ordered that all things must, of necessity, conspire to further every true attempt to translate the Christian ideal into actuality. Hence, leaving out of account such social evils as are obviously caused by deliberate wrongdoing, Christians are constrained to regard all social evil which rests upon collective volition embodied in laws and customs, as being due to imperfect understanding and unfaithful application of the spirit and laws of Christ, and will insist that the true remedy is to be found in a fuller acceptance and expression of His revelation. Hence Christianity cannot be satisfied with the achievements of the past. To begin with, because great as they have been they have yet been so largely ineffectual. In the next place, because Christianity is a continuous spiritual life, which flourishes only so long as it puts forth victorious energy for the transformation of the world. And, finally, because the essential nature of its spiritual life demands the most far-reaching social expression. The history of the relations between Christianity and civilization cannot, therefore, be a completed book. Neither Christianity nor civilization has been completed, nor will either reach its consummation till its relations with the other have been perfected. The history,

therefore, is chiefly useful as giving both guidance and inspiration for present and future efforts. It will supply principles rather than precedents; vital ends and not accidental means. It will instruct us by its shortcomings as well as by its achievements. In particular it will teach the all-important lesson that Christianity has most truly served the cause of social progress by the creative fearlessness, which has shrunk from no innovation, or even revolution, which has been possible and needful in order to full realization of its distinctive life. To celebrate the triumph of Christian principles and movements in the past, without asking what kindred, and even greater service they prompt us to render in the present, is, as our Lord has taught us, to build the sepulchres of the prophets and thereby show ourselves to be the children of those who slew them. The prophetic succession is the only tribute that the prophets can receive. Hence the present inquiry seeks to elucidate the characteristic influence of Christ in order to show that the modern social problem not only makes an imperative demand upon the Churches, but also that it can only be solved by the means that the Churches can bring to bear.

The point of view of this volume is governed by certain important presuppositions. To begin with, it is assumed that our present social condition is unsatisfactory. In the next place it is suggested that the problem set by the present social condition is one. However many elements may be present, they go to make up one organic whole. Further, it is assumed that the social problem of the ages has a distinctively modern form, claiming, therefore, a treatment special to our own age. Again the form prescribed for our investigation takes for granted that the problem will not solve itself. A remedy cannot

be hoped for in automatic action, but only by deliberate effort. Moreover, such effort must not be confined within those limits of practical life wherein the problem finds external manifestation. If it were so, the only people concerned with it would be the statesmen, economists and organizers of commercial and industrial life. On the positive side, it is presupposed that the problem is in the last resort spiritual, concerned rather with the wills of men than with inadequate or refractory conditions of their lot. If it were the latter, men would not be called to solve a problem, still less would spiritual influences be invoked. Humanity must, in that case, organize its ambulance service and be content. Being held to be a spiritual problem, the social problem is treated as a call to the Christian forces of the nation. Finally, it is suggested that the problem is soluble, if treated as ultimately spiritual and dealt with by spiritual means. All these assumptions must be considered before we are enabled to show what Christians ought to do, and to make an appeal to them well grounded alike in the nature and history of their religion to discharge their duty, in the faith and obedience of Christ. It is well, therefore, that we should start with a clear recognition of the imperfection of our existing civilization and of the task that this fact imposes upon Christians.

What, then, is the Modern Social Problem? It is impossible, within our space, to attempt a detailed description of it for, while existing everywhere throughout the country, it differs very much in detail and in degrees of acuteness, according as we consider urban or rural populations; and in regard to the former greatly depends upon the size of the population and upon the differing conditions of local industry. Again, we are living in times of rapid legislative and adminis-

trative changes, and when such changes are chiefly directed towards alleviating social evils. The situation alters constantly. The grant of Old Age Pensions, for example, has profoundly affected it, not so much because of the immediate relief given to the aged poor, but because of the reforms both in regard to the relations of the State to industry, and in regard to the Poor Law, which are involved in it. Again, the housing problem, at any rate in the towns, is by no means as grave as it was a few years ago, owing in part to the carrying out of great housing schemes both by municipal and private activity, and still more to the multiplication of facilities for cheap transit, which have sensibly relieved the congested areas of the great cities, and will tend to the reduction of rents.[1] The Housing and Town-planning Act recently passed, though by no means as effective a measure as could have been desired, is likely to accelerate this remedial process, while doing something to increase the amenities and therefore the healthfulness of large towns, at any rate so far as their future growth is concerned. Once more, the treatment of the social problem may easily create a feeling of undue pessimism, because the brighter features, both of the retrospect and the prospect, are inevitably left out of account. We must, however, not forget that the great increase of the national wealth, although it has not been attended by an equitable distribution of it, has greatly raised the standard of living for the successful in all classes

[1] See the Return of the number of Empty Houses in the great cities and towns of the United Kingdom presented to the House of Commons by the President of the Local Government Board in August 1909. It must be remembered, however, that such empty houses owing to their character and situation, are often not available for relieving congestion elsewhere, even in the same town.

of society. In addition, the cheapening of the necessaries of life that has resulted from Free Trade and from the policy of selecting luxuries and superfluities, instead of necessaries, for taxation has increased the purchasing power of the poor. The steady development of popular education, despite many obstacles and much obstruction, has accomplished much and promises still more. The industrial classes, moreover, have won, after long struggles, complete liberty of combination. The skilled trades have, therefore, been enabled to secure higher wages and better conditions of labour, though some serious deductions must be made in respect of the insecurity resulting from trade depression, ill-health and other causes. The extension of the franchise and the establishment of representative authorities for local government, with steadily rising ideals and increasing powers to deal with social conditions are important factors, the possibilities of which must be fully recognized. If it is not our business now to dwell upon these relieving features they must not for a moment be forgotten.

Yet an immense problem remains, which is, to begin with, economic, but which includes religious, moral, and intellectual elements that are of profound importance. A large proportion of the population, both in town and country, have to exist permanently upon less than a living wage, that is upon less than is necessary so to feed, clothe and house an average family as to secure physical well-being, with some small margin for needful recreation.[1] This is the case, not merely in so-called sweated industries,

[1] See upon this subject Rowntree's *Poverty* (Macmillan, 1s.). The writer's estimate of the proportion of the population that comes short of enjoying a living wage may be somewhat excessive. But on any calculation, the facts are sufficiently serious.

but in regard to the great mass of unskilled labour both in town and country. Still more serious, perhaps, is the lack of security, of which more must be said later on. Owing to these causes, the industrial movement upwards is accompanied by a terrible drift downwards which, as will be seen subsequently is extending in area, and is filling the centres of our great cities with almost hopeless wrecks of humanity. If, then, we wish to realize the meaning of the Modern Social Problem we must, first of all, explore the city slum, and not only the slum, properly so-called, but the ever-widening areas of our great cities, especially of London, which are the headquarters of unskilled labour. Here the insufficiency of wages to maintain health, the rise of rents owing to pressure of population (in the case of London because its imperfect unification leaves the poorer districts unjustly burdened with the cost of sanitation and other local charges), and the insecurity of labour are to be found at their worst. To these centres have come the victims of agricultural depression in the country, often displacing from employment the less vigorous town-bred labourer. Hither drift the unfit of every kind. Here is to be found the hopeless competition of scores or even of hundreds of men to obtain one job.

While not dwelling on the obvious physical evils of such a state of things, it is necessary to point out some aspects of the matter which are little realized by the well-to-do. Above all, is the fact and the sense of insecurity. At any moment depression of trade, the introduction of labour-saving machinery, or the failure of a business firm may bring the most deserving face to face with the horrors of unemployment. Such an experience is bewildering in itself, but still more so if it be borne in mind that the causes which

put a man out of particular employment are usually sufficiently wide in their operation to prevent him from getting work elsewhere. Moreover, he who seeks work under such conditions is exposed to cruel indignities, must often fight like a wild beast to get his place from other competitors, and is exposed to gnawing anxiety, until such demoralization sets in as deadens his sensibility by destroying his manhood. Hence the swift transition from being unemployed to becoming unemployable. Meanwhile the hard necessity is too often laid upon the breadwinner that whoever may come short of food—whether wife or little ones—he must be fed lest the last ray of hope should vanish through his breakdown. And short of such calamities, the pressure of competition and the various risks of employing any save the most efficient labour destroy the chance of employment after the prime of muscular vigour has been passed, and cause workmen to be haunted with the fear of falling sick or of displaying any physical infirmity, however slight. To all this must be added the manifold evils that attend upon casual or seasonal labour, with long periods of enforced idleness and with the almost hopeless demoralization which comes from uncertainty and irregularity of life. The ignorance, immobility, and lack of elasticity that characterize such labour should also be borne in mind. Economists speak somewhat loftily of the absorption of displaced labour by new industries. But the process is at best slow and takes full effect only in the next generation of workers. Meanwhile the tragedy of broken lives is unspeakable. Further, let it be remembered that children are born into this hereditary condition. Their early years are, too often, pinched and saddened by it, their outlook is limited by its narrowing conditions, and at too early an age they are

thrust out to repeat the experiences of those who have gone before them, or even, it may be, to inflict still further damage upon the industrial chances of the previous generation. It need hardly be said that such influences work havoc with the home. Overcrowding, frequent "flittings," occasional acquaintance with the workhouse, the breaking down of order, all tend to destroy not only the beauty, but too often the existence, of home life. Young people, not out of their teens and brought up under such conditions, found homes and rear families in their turn. Is it a wonder that unfitness to discharge parental duties is one of the saddest features of slum life, that mothers, who have themselves spent the most momentous years of their life in casual labour and are forced to continue in it after marriage, are so helpless and unwise that it has been found necessary to establish schools for them in order that they be instructed in the most rudimentary truths concerning the care of infants?

Around such hapless and hopeless people the environment of the slum closes with deadly effect. Its fetid atmosphere, its insanitary conditions, and its deadly monotony are enough to drag its inhabitants down to the lowest level of physical and mental inefficiency. Yet this is the least part of it. The slum is also the "congested area" where drink shops vie with one another to complete the ruin of the unfortunate and unfit. The exclusion of young children from licensed premises in such circumstances is but an inadequate and makeshift remedy even so far as they are concerned. The atmosphere of drink is all around. The drink habit is one of the earliest formed. Intoxicating drink is the supplement of insufficient food, the condiment or substitute for food, unattractive both in its nature and in the way it is prepared. Above

all it is the anodyne of misery, the artificial means of rising above squalid cares and surroundings. Worst of all, perhaps, is the fact that all those who are neighbours suffer from the same evils and are reduced to a common unfitness. There are few to set a higher standard and thereby to kindle the spirit of a healthy emulation. No doubt education has done something. The heart of a little little slum child is as receptive to higher influences as is that of one in higher station. But the influence of school is too weak to overcome the steady pressure of the whole of the ordinary environment. Meet the youth or girl of seventeen or eighteen, after a few years' occupation in casual labour, and how coarsened they have become since the old school days. The influences at the most critical period of their life are downward and not upward. Of course, the excellent work of evening schools, institutes, clubs and brigades must not be overlooked. But the provision of such help comes pitiably short of the need. Indeed, speaking generally, the Churches are not organized, equipped, and inspired, as yet, for a decisive victory where the fight for a Christian civilization is hardest. Here and there, at much cost of men, women and money a successful work is carried on. But wise, sympathetic and magnetic friendship is largely wanting where it is needed most. An overworked minister of religion, deserted by the workers who have gone to the suburbs, and harassed to keep his dwindling congregation together, cannot carry on a vigorous or successful campaign against the sin and suffering he sees around him. And, were his resources a hundredfold greater, let it be remembered that no agency or institution can take the place of a healthful and happy home! The very multiplicity of our agencies is often the surest evidence of the well-nigh incurable evils with which

their promoters are bravely struggling to deal. Hence the presence at the heart of all our great cities, and especially of London, of multitudes of people, physically degenerate, mentally unstable, demoralized and materialized, who are the victims and not the heirs of our so-called Christian civilization. Their case has been only imperfectly presented. They are the embodiment and expression of the Modern Social Problem.

In the consideration of this state of things, two important facts must be borne in mind. In the first place, that this state of things has hitherto, for the most part, been pronounced to be inevitable. No doubt those who speak thus have little or no personal acquaintance with the human meaning of the facts of which they glibly speak. They deal with economic factors, without enough sensibility or imagination to remember that their own brothers and sisters are concerned. The industry and commerce of the world, and especially of the country, must be carried on. Reservoirs and reserves of cheap labour are required. So long as this need is supplied and the merchant gets his goods, what does it matter to the business man at a distance, or to the abstract theorist, that men and women are being thrown upon the scrapheap by the process, more surely than is the case with obsolete or worn-out machinery? This is not an imputation of heartlessness in the ordinary sense of the term. Sympathy is the offspring of seeing. And owing to the distance that separates rich and poor in large cities, the personal contact, which enables and even compels seeing, is absent. Hence many are shocked when the plain facts are stated, and are ready to assume that their informant is hysterical or embittered. In addition to the necessities of the army of industry, it is

held that the greatest efficiency of the fit can only be maintained by the sacrifice of the unfit. The pressure of competition, and even of unregulated competition, is held to be so needful, if each is to do his best, that things must be allowed to take their course. The independence of the economic unit slowly won from serfdom and from the public regulation of labour, must be jealously upheld. Moreover economic laws are constantly spoken of as if they acted as irresistibly and with as complete independence of the human will as gravitation itself. Hence no effective pressure in the direction of reform can be expected from those whose immediate interests are served or whose philosophy is satisfied by the present state of affairs.

In the second place, the problem of the city slum is in complete solidarity with the social problem elsewhere. Not only are its essential features reproduced on a small scale in countless towns and villages, but the existence of kindred evils in the country leads directly to their increase in the great centres of population. The unsatisfactory position and prospects of the agricultural labourer have denuded the rural districts only to add to the congestion and extreme competition of the cities. Size, the element of chance, colour, excitement all arouse hopes and desires which attract from the countryside. The failures drift to the great centres. The energetic set their face thither and displace less vigorous labour where they come. Thus, though the centre of the problem is in the city it can only be dealt with there by means sufficiently powerful and all-embracing to cure the evil everywhere.

At the other end of the social scale is to be found the luxury of the rich. It is neither necessary, nor would it be altogether just, to bring the charge of

wasteful luxury and extravagance against any class as a whole. There are many of the rich to whom it does not apply. Still more, the loss of simplicity of life and restraint in expenditure are characteristic evils at present in every class, where income exceeds the primary needs of life, measured by the special standard of each class. The pursuit of pleasure, with the indiscipline and extravagance that spring out of it, are the forms which the social problem takes among the successful and secure. That which interferes with an indulgence is regarded as an injustice. At the time when this is written, those who dislike the land taxes of the present Budget paint gloomy pictures of the unemployment which will result from them. It seems never to occur to those who use such arguments how small is the body of labour which is affected, even assuming that the whole of it is useful. Many a change of fashion in dress has involved more loss of employment than Mr. Lloyd George's Budget can possibly bring about. Still more, it is necessary to balance against diminished demand for labour by the wealthy, the increased demand for it which would immediately take place were the burdens of the poor lightened by effective social reform.

This imperfect review of the present social situation shows that, regarded from the purely economic standpoint, there is no hope of a solution. It tends, on the contrary, to perpetuate itself. Commercial interests are nervous of change which may affect for ill the gigantic and sensitive interests of finance, or may give temporary advantages to foreign rivals. Those who have accustomed themselves to a certain standard of comfort and luxury are easily alarmed at the possibility of any unfavourable alteration, whether positive or relative. The worst victims of social evil

have neither the energy, the hope, nor the organizing power to work out their own salvation by themselves. It may be suggested that the hope of the future lies in combination. But waiving the objection that the remedy of combination assumes a state of permanent, if latent, warfare between capital and labour, this method is impracticable. So long as an excess of unskilled labour exists, constantly recruited from the unsuccessful, the untrained and the juvenile, there is no possibility of collective bargaining with employers. The ultimate resource of combination, a strike, is impossible—unless indeed the conditions are such as to bring outside moral forces into the field, as was the case in the London Dock Strike of 1889—for the labour withdrawn can, in most cases, be at least temporarily replaced. Moreover, the risk of such combination is one of the most powerful influences in securing the introduction of labour-saving appliances. Hence the economic problem cannot be solved by ordinary economic forces, if left to themselves.

But, it may be asked, what about the palliatives which exist? Apart from such help as is afforded by the co-operation of the very poor themselves—for example by the more imperfect types of sick benefit societies, which are for the most part organized by philanthropic agencies—these consist of the Poor Law and of charitable relief.

The Poor Law is intended to prevent the possibility of death by starvation or from inability to obtain medical attention in sickness. The common workhouse, with its infirm wards, is the primary institution, which reveals its original design.[1] The estab-

[1] It is impossible within our limits to touch upon the origin and history of the Poor Law or to explain the reasons that led to the momentous reform of 1834, which is the basis of present Poor Law administration.

lishment of great Poor Law infirmaries for the sick, of various systems of dealing with children, of separate institutions for the treatment of the aged and infirm, the able-bodied and other classes, are developments brought about in part by administrative necessities, and still more by the growing sympathy and wisdom of Guardians of the poor and of the ratepayers to whom they appeal. The fundamental condition of relief, however, is destitution. The chief end proposed is to maintain the economic independence of the poor by exacting from them the spirit of independence and self-help. Hence the first principle of Poor Law relief has been that it must be less attractive than the most meagre subsistence without it, and that the offer of it must be associated with such deterrents, and even indignities, that no one will be tempted to have recourse to it who can possibly do without it. Any softening of such conditions in recent times marks a departure from the original principle, and, as recent experience has shown, may produce, so long as it is carried on under the legal conditions at present existing, the embarrassment of costly institutions and of the rapid spread of pauperism. Hence the following dilemma is created. Either the Poor Law must be administered in all its severity, in which case its very relief is an aggravation of the sufferings of the poor by reason of the mental anguish it inflicts, or its severity must be relaxed, with the result that sound economic progress is checked, and that new kinds of demoralization abound. It is impossible that the action of the present Poor Law should be, in any true sense, remedied, save in the case of children educated and started in life by the more competent Boards of Guardians.[1]

[1] Even in such cases the powers of the Guardians are too limited to secure the largest amount of success.

The very fact that it can only step in when men and women have hopelessly broken down means that any remedial action, if attempted, comes too late to secure the co-operation of hope, energy, and character in its object. Yet this is quite indispensable if a satisfactory result is to be reached. Help to prevent failure is what is needed, instead of attempts to palliate failure after it has taken place. Humane progress is swiftly giving the ascendency to sympathy over coercion. This involves the total reform of the system, in order that sympathy may be armed with adequate powers—educational, disciplinary and co-operative—to make its action truly remedial so long as the causes which necessitate special treatment of the unfortunate continue to operate.[1]

To a large extent, the same objections must be taken to charitable relief. Of course, it is impossible to foresee a time when special needs and emergencies will not call for private help. When such help is brought with the comprehension and sympathy of true friendship it can do nothing but good, for it calls forth the best and most powerful of motives, in both giver and receiver, and cements the fellowship out of which it springs. Short of this charity does more harm than good. It delays the application of real remedies, it attracts the least worthy to receive it; it is spasmodic in its action and frequently unwise in its methods. Furthermore it involves the manifold evils of patronage, can be exploited for unworthy ends, and becomes a profession instead of a ministry. By its nature it can only temper effects, without dealing with causes. It is exposed to the subtle temptation of seeking to perpetuate, rather than to end, the social conditions to which it owes its rise. Only as the ideal

[1] See the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission, 1909.

of righteousness supersedes that of charity, as the goal of independence, instead of dependence, is sought for its objects, and as its exercise means the co-operation of friendship, can philanthropy be treated as a real factor in the emancipation of the poor, and the transformation of society. Its truest aim, so far as private effort is concerned, should be to provide the upholding influence, the stand-by, of personal contact.

Sufficient has now been said to show that the Modern Social Problem is above all spiritual. No doubt it is conditioned by economic facts and laws. It can be greatly affected by political action. The grant of Old Age Pensions, the establishment of labour exchanges, the carrying out of great schemes of State-aided and supervised insurance against invalidity and unemployment, the prevention of sweating, the staying of the torrent of unskilled labour by diverting from it, through sounder education, the more capable boys and girls who at present swell it, the opening up of the land to small holders, the institution of public works—afforestation, drainage, coast protection, etc.—against times of trade contraction—all these may be expected to make a marked impression upon existing evils. The remodelling of the aims and powers of the Poor Law—in a sense its abolition—will effectively supplement these wider processes, whatever arrangements may be made for superseding the present Boards of Guardians. A truly progressive municipal policy will steadily improve all the conditions of town life, But if such a social policy in all its entirety is to be set on foot, effectively carried through, and successfully administered—in spite of hostile combinations and human inertia—great spiritual influences must be at work throughout the community. The social problem must be grasped as an organic whole. Its

solution must be undertaken as a national task in which all classes are called to co-operate. It must be pursued with steadfast and strenuous resolution. It must be compassed by far-reaching and continuous efforts, legislative, administrative and philanthropic. All this is impossible till one supreme ideal gains command of the nation as the prime object of this collective endeavour. That object can be nothing less than the complete abolition of demoralizing and degrading poverty, and thereby the bringing of the poorest into the full inheritance of civilization. Many elements go to make up the fullness of this ideal, but the indispensable basis of them all is the determination to secure for all at least the minimum of economic well-being which is essential to the enjoyment of all the highest goods of life. The attainment of this great end cannot be reached without manifold readjustments of social, economic, and political relations. It calls for renewed hope and effort on the part of the less fortunate, for no man can be saved, for any true end of life, in spite of himself. Equally it calls for the triumph of brotherly co-operation and brotherly sacrifice on the part of the more fortunate. In short, the social consciousness must become sovereign in its authority over the national life, subordinating, until it utterly expels, selfish individualism, class jealousies, and timid dislike of necessary change. Only slowly, and with much difficulty, will political forces and economic relations respond to and become transformed by this supreme ideal. True the so-called "economic man" is so stiff an abstraction as to be a caricature of humanity. The pursuit of wealth for its own sake is not, commonly, the master motive even in the case of those who seek to get rich. But selfishness, stupidity, and timidity are mighty forces of obstruction, not to speak of the

material difficulties that must be encountered. Nothing but heroic determination, collective wisdom, and a great inspiration of brotherhood will suffice. It would be a fatal mistake to confuse these qualities with a particular economic doctrine—say, for example, with State Socialism. The question is therefore that of the national character—its seriousness, sympathy, sense of brotherhood. Can the social consciousness overcome the forces that are arrayed against it? In other words, the Modern Social Problem is, above all, spiritual. Produced in its most aggravated symptoms by the unrestrained freedom of industrial development and competition, its terrible and menacing import is forcing the mind and conscience of the nation to face anew the ultimate principles of social righteousness. They cannot be ignored or postponed. Palliatives have proved ineffectual. The agencies of philanthropy, alike in their promise and their shortcomings, show the presence of good-will, but of good-will defective in power, range and equipment. The whole army of humanity must take the field. Because the social problem is spiritual and national, the only hope of its solution lies in a great religious inspiration.

This conclusion establishes immediately the peculiar responsibility at this juncture of the Christian Church. There is no need to dwell on the minor reasons which strengthen this contention. Some of them must, however, be named. The social problem has become a grave danger to the State. The Church must always be a school of true patriotism, encouraging its members to serve the State; both warning the State of its spiritual dangers and assisting it to overcome them. The social problem inflicts untold and unmerited sufferings on multitudes. The Church is a school of humanity, and, on peril of brutalizing men

both within and without its pale, must bring home to all the meaning of the evil and seek by all legitimate means to alleviate it. The social problem exposes its victims to cruel temptations, threatens where it does not destroy their power to resist them, materializes their outlook and, incidentally, defeats the efforts of the Church to awaken their faith and hope of better things. Hence if the Church is to become a "covert from the storm," as "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," resolute action must be taken to destroy such evils at the root. Furthermore, so far as the social problem exists through the collective will of the community, expressed in laws and customs, the members of the Church are implicated in the wrong that is done, strengthening or at least acquiescing in it, if they do not contribute to reform it. It is a fatal mistake, in a democratic age, to depersonalize the action of the State, and thus to belittle the responsibility of the citizens, and not least of Christian citizens, for it. Once more, it is Christianity more than any other influence which has elevated the social condition into a problem. To be a problem it must be conceived as, at once, an evil and a remediable evil. It is Christianity that has made it both. Kindred evils existed in, and hastened the downfall of ancient civilizations. Yet the heart of the community was not moved, nor was the conscience stirred by them. The political philosophy even of Plato and Aristotle—always concerned with the ideal State—justified these evils, as not only inevitable, but as reasonable and even beneficial. It is Christianity which has changed the social outlook, not only by its doctrine of the personal worth of the lowliest and worst, and by evoking in them unsuspected spiritual powers, but by the cumulative effect of its message on mankind. The Fatherhood

of God, the divinely-humane ministry of the incarnate Son of God now exalted as the Sovereign and spiritual Redeemer of mankind, "the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven," the redemption of the universe from its evil, the supremacy of the law and life of Love, what are these but a challenge to all existing evils? Wherein lies their final verification if the realm of reality to which they belong is a world apart, out of all organic relationship to the earthly history of mankind? Such a view contradicts the witness of the Incarnation, reduces Isaiah to imbecility, and gives the lie to the deepest teachings of our Lord.[1] The Fatherhood of God can only be set forth, verified and vindicated by the brotherly love of His Church. God's universe, and still more mankind, must constantly be summoned, by the faith that removes mountains, to give consenting witness to the truth that God is Love. In Christianity no Dualism is possible. And with the denial of Dualism vanishes contempt for the meaning and despair of the possibilities of earthly life as the gift of the Divine Father and the preparation for eternal life. Not only will the reason of man be baffled and his humanity receive a deadly blow unless this be the case, but faith itself will lose its buoyancy and the active reason by which it goes forward to reconcile and unify heaven and earth—by thought, ideal and deed—will be foiled. Therefore, the spiritual must be fulfilled in the moral, the moral must mould the social, and the social must assume command over and transform the material environment, if regenerated mankind is to work together with God to make all things new. Hence it has come to pass that every great revival of Christianity

[1] E.g. the Sermon on the Mount, the Parables of the Grain of Mustard Seed, the Leaven, etc.

has inaugurated a new period of social endeavour and reform.

It may be asked whether the Christian revelation does not assume the permanent existence of suffering, treat it as an indispensable discipline, and thereby transmute it into a means of higher good. Undoubtedly it does. Nor is it possible that social reform, carried to its utmost limits, can ever eliminate the element of suffering from the human lot. A life bounded by death, and exposed to the buffets and mortal strokes dealt by material nature, will never be immune from suffering. If he became so, man would sink into a denizen of earth instead of rising to become a citizen of heaven. But the following all-important considerations must be borne in mind. Firstly, the Christian religion has no mercy upon those who callously allow their brethren to remain under remediable suffering. Let the epistle of St. James be read as a summary of Christian teaching on this point. Or let St. John, the greatest mystic of the Christian religion, speak: "But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?" Above all, let our Lord's test be borne in mind, "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto Me." In applying such declarations, let it be remembered that if in some ways individual liberty is increased in modern times, yet in other respects the more complex organization of modern commerce and industry forces both justice and compassion to assume collective expression, if they are to be applied at all. Secondly, the New Testament insists much more constantly upon the inevitable passion and suffering of those who would be the agents of God in redeeming their fellows, than

upon the necessary sufferings of those they seek to redeem. Modern Christianity has lightly transferred this burden, assuming for the most part that the representatives of Christ are to be protected from the suffering of a Christlike passion, while "the masses" are to feel its full force. Thirdly, the irreducible minimum of suffering works beneficent ends only so long as men face the causes of suffering as a whole, hopefully and unitedly, in the serious and joyful determination to overcome them. Dull submission to evil not only deadens the spirit, but destroys the power of suffering itself to refine and build up character.

All this will probably be allowed. The difficulty, for many minds, arises when the question of the relation of *organized* Christianity—the Church—to the Social Problem is reached. So long as sentiments of humanity, or the individual conduct that springs from them, are concerned little or no objection is raised. But directly the attempt is made to universalize sentiments as principles of collective action and to give expression to them in the complex relations of economic and political life, then—although this may be the only means of making them prevail—the objection is strongly taken that this lies outside the province of the Church, and is even contrary to its peculiar mission.

To begin with, it is frequently held that the laws of Christ are laws for His Church, intended, therefore, to govern the select relations of the members, and not as law universal. This raises, of course, the whole question of the relations of the Church to the ordinary world, not so much in the externality of its organization and action, as in the scope of its spiritual principles. It is impossible to deal exhaustively with this subject now. But the following considerations are

all-important. The universalism of Apostolic Christianity must be our clue to the meaning of specialized Church relations. Christ, says St. Paul, "ascended far above all the heavens that He might fill all things" (Eph. iv. 10). Out of that universal immanence spring the ministries of the Church. All men are, therefore, potential subjects of the kingdom and members of the Church; they are to be treated as such. Moreover, love—the life-spring of the Church—will not be limited either in its range or in its objects. Its realized expression in the Church necessitates its going forth to all mankind. "As ye have opportunity do good unto all men, and especially unto them that are of the household of faith" is as broad in its extent as it is natural and human in its recognition of primary and special obligations. Still less can love, as the supreme principle of life, tolerate two incompatible standards of conduct, one towards those that are within the Church and another towards those that are without, or, perhaps, one towards members of the Church in their spiritual and another towards them in their economic interests and relations. Love finds such dichotomies both suicidal and hypocritical. Moreover, if love would sincerely prevail for all the ends of life within the Church, its victory must also be won in all the realms that lie outside. For the Church, however separate it may seek to be from the concerns of ordinary life, is so inextricably bound up with them, that either the Church must seek spiritually to prevail over them or they will prevail over and within the Church. Hence the isolation of the Church from the social problem conceived as spiritual cannot be maintained for the two reasons that such isolation would negative the universal mission of the Gospel and also that it would make any effort to live out

the life of Christ within the borders of the Church itself absolutely hopeless. When any body of earnest Christians have actually withdrawn from the world, they have always organized for themselves an ideal state. Such withdrawal being possible only temporarily and on the narrowest scale, it becomes vital that the whole Church, cultivating the common life and in alliance with all men of good-will, should seek to transform the whole State.

But more deepseated difficulties must be considered. Some that were urged in bygone days are rapidly losing their significance at the present time. For example, it used to be contended that the mission of Christ, and therefore of His Church, was to save individual souls, and that, therefore, social and material concerns were beyond the sphere of the directly Christian commission. For most thoughtful persons this objection has broken down at both points. To begin with the importance of the personal experience of salvation being granted, it is impossible to deal with an abstract individual, cut off from all social relationships. Such an individual does not and cannot exist. Hence the Gospel is addressed to persons who can only realize their personality in and through social relationships. Salvation must, therefore, include the transformation of those personal relationships and all that springs from them. In the next place neither the religious nor the psychological interpretation of individuality will permit complete separation of soul and body, of powers directed to the spiritual and those directed to the physical ends of life. Not only does the personality unite both, but it unites them not by an external, but by a vital and organic bond. Hence as the man is one the work of salvation cannot ignore any part or need of his complex nature. All this is

securing growing recognition by the Christian Church at the present day.

The truth of these reasons for Christian action to solve the social problem, however, has not yet produced universal conviction. It is urged that the Christian religion belongs to a transcendent order of things. It consists in the conveyance of eternal life to believers in Christ. Its source, goal and "conversation" are in heaven. Hence Christ did not concern Himself with political, economic and social concerns, and, if He ministered physical healing, it was by spiritual influences and for spiritual ends. His example must, of needs, limit our conduct, not only because of His authority, but because any departure from His methods involves spiritual disaster. It leads those who suffer from earthly disadvantages unduly to magnify them, instead of seeking to live the transcendent life, in which evil is itself transmuted into a means of good. Further, it materializes the aims and spirit of the Church and thereby disables it from receiving the highest spiritual influences and attaining the highest spiritual ends. It is, furthermore, an entire mistake to suppose that material security and prosperity have anything to do with the Kingdom of God. It is conceivable that all our social problems might be successfully solved, without the Kingdom of God being appreciably advanced. At the best, its work of evangelizing men would have to be done anew for every successive generation, no matter what might be their social condition. Moreover, legislation means, in the last resort, the prevalence of strength. In our more civilized days, legislation by majorities has taken the place of civil war. But it partakes, notwithstanding, of the nature of warfare. Hence the Church is debarred from interfering with the course of legislation, since our

Lord has said, "My kingdom is not of this world." To all this must be added the many practical dangers of internal strife and loss of influence with those who are opposed to particular reforms, which must ensue whenever the Church departs from an attitude of strict neutrality in all social concerns that ultimately involve political relations. Hence, as the result of all these considerations, it is argued that the social influence of the Christian Church can only be incidental and indirect, or, at the utmost, limited to the inculcation of spiritual principles, upon which social reform may and ultimately will be based.

It is necessary to consider the case thus presented, although limits of space prevent any exhaustive treatment of it. Let it be granted, at once, that the Christian religion is spiritual and transcendent. Yet what is spiritual transcendence, whether that of God over the universe, that of Christ over humanity, or that of the Spirit over the individual heart? It implies sovereign immanence. A transcendent God who was not also immanent would cease to be transcendent in any relevant sense of the term, and vice versâ. And the same is true of the other relations just instanced. To say that Christianity is a spiritual life, realized in and through Divine relationships, does indeed imply that it cannot be defined in any terms of secular life, be they political, economic, or social. It is more than and other than all these whether separately or in combination. In the same way, it cannot be defined in terms of intellect, feeling or will. Yet this is not to say that it either can or seeks to exist apart from all these interests and powers. The very fact that it transcends all these gives to it, not only the power but the function to subordinate, direct and inspire them all. In the living complex of human life re-

ligion must fulfil its transforming and uplifting office in the most vital and thorough-going way, or the elements it has failed to control will rise up to corrupt and degrade it. By this light we must understand both the example and the teaching of our Lord. Without dwelling upon the primary objects or the limiting conditions of His historic ministry, it will suffice to call attention to His declaration that He came "to fulfil" the law and the prophets. Fulfilment always transcends preparation in every realm of life. Thus our Lord's fulfilment is not only disentangled from the limitations of time and place which affected both the law and the prophets, but thereby manifests a new order of truth and life. Yet the fulfilment must be in vital, and not merely external relations to the preparation. It must fulfil a promise and expectation latent and growing in the preparation. Both the Law and the prophets, in different ways and in differing degrees of perfection, seek expression for the spiritual in the social. In particular, the prophets cannot conceive of any true religion which does not issue in a state ideally moral and humane. The fact that such a state is the creation and gift of God, does not remove it from the aspiration and effort of men. Nay, it imposes upon men the duty of seeking to create it. Our Lord's fulfilment, as all His teaching shows, lay in its supreme revelation of the meaning, power and obligation of Love—to God and man. Love is a spiritual principle. It can never be identified with any particular practical endeavour, or with any external arrangements. Yet it must needs strive to express itself in such endeavours, and to create for itself the state of things in which it can display all its potency. Hence, though the universality and spirituality of our Lord's example were in themselves suffi-

cient to prevent His limiting His everlasting Gospel by temporal efforts, He gave final manifestation and inspiration to principles, which can only survive by expressing themselves throughout the whole range of human life and by the use of all the instruments at their disposal. Of course, all attempts thus to assert the meaning and to gain the results of the supreme principle of Love must be governed by the Spirit of Christ. The material is a Christian concern, not in its abstract secularity, but in so far as it enters into and affects for evil or for good, as it assuredly does, the spiritual life of love. Its place must neither be exaggerated nor ignored. Above all, it must be seen that man cannot touch, appropriate and shape the material for his own ends without his very use of it reacting upon him, to his spiritual advantage or injury. When a spiritual being handles "things," they inevitably become more than things: they become forces or objects of a spiritual activity, which will be exalted or debased according to its use or abuse of them. No doubt the legal, customary, or material result of social reform, viewed in itself, is secular and cannot for a moment be confounded with the Kingdom of God. But the attempt to secure such results may and should be spiritual, in both motive and method. Indeed it may impose the greatest strain upon spiritual virtues, often severer than what is regarded as more spiritual work. For example, we have known many whose advancement in Christian love is sufficient to make them ardently desire the "salvation of souls," who are extremely stingy in the matter of subscriptions towards beneficent ends, or keenly resent any call to contribute through taxes and rates to social reforms which they admit to be beneficial or even necessary. Yet though the outward result of social reform be

not spiritual, that result, when unified with the spiritual forces which have brought it about and continue to use it for their own vital ends, is inextricably bound up with the coming of the Kingdom of God. Otherwise the Apocalyptic visions, both of the Old Testament and the New, must be dismissed as the childish fancies of an unspiritual imagination.

So far as the legislative application of spiritual principles is concerned it may be admitted that something in the nature of warfare may enter into the case. Yet an objection, which would make it impossible for the Christian Church, as such, to bring pressure to bear for the closing of the sweater's den and the gambling hell, to demand the suppression of the Indian opium traffic, or the rescue of the enslaved Congo races, and which would withdraw the missionary societies from all concern in the humane progress of India were the Government to nationalize their schools and hospitals, surely needs some careful scrutiny. It might as truly be said that the exercise of authority by a Christian father over a rebellious child, or of discipline by a Christian schoolmaster over a refractory scholar, are of the nature of warfare. It will be replied that such cases imply recognized authority on the one side, and tutelage on the other. Evil has undoubtedly resulted whenever the Christian Church has claimed that exactly these relations exist between itself and mankind. Yet such examples show that the exercise of pressure, as well as of influence, may often be justified on the highest grounds. And it is preposterous to contend that the one influence, which on occasion can counteract the selfishness of men, and appeal to their better nature against their worse, should refrain from exercising this influence at any crisis when the interests of humanity are at stake.

That would be to allow the Devil's forces to occupy the field. The objects and duty of the Church as a whole can never be narrower and poorer than those of its individual members, else it would cease to guide and inspire their life. Nor can fidelity to a principle be reconciled with the neglect of practical measures for carrying it out. But if the Church enter the field of social warfare, it must be on conditions which are laid down by its spiritual mission. To begin with, it must be when the general sense of its members recognizes a divinely-imposed obligation to do so. In the next place, it must be for truly catholic ends ; for ends, that is to say, that are recognized as necessary to fulfilling the second Commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." If these conditions are fulfilled, not only will the Church pursue no sectional object, but, even in case of controversy or struggle, its members will be satisfied that the attainment of a truly catholic end can in no wise really injure even those who for the time being oppose it. In this respect the action of the Church will arise from altogether different motives from those of ordinary sectional or political warfare. Thus typically Christian action will, for the most part, be reconciling rather than controversial. Its appeal will be to the highest and most universal interests. In prosecuting these it will mediate rather than aggravate strife. It will enable spiritual and moral interests to make themselves heard and felt above the clamour of interested factions. This view, if taken, is sufficient to turn aside the danger either of identifying the Christian Church with any particular political party, or of the creation of a so-called Christian party by the Church. Sound progress demands, just as human limitations insure, the interaction of progressive and of critical

minds. Each type has its own distinctive service to render, the office of the Church being to assist to get all problems, however regarded, treated in the light of the Kingdom of God. In all these situations, a truly spiritual Church will find the guidance of faith, and will act for ends that are never lower and less than those of humanity. That mistakes should be made, in social concerns as in others, is inevitable. Yet the Church need fear no warfare, so long as her sword is " the Sword of the Spirit," and she takes the " armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left."

Yet, although the Christian Church must from time to time pursue essential principles on to the field of controversial life, her main service is that of influential witness to the ideals by which men and states must live. The supreme marks of a truly Christian and catholic spirit are sixfold. In the first place, there is the inwardness which responds to the presence and power of God in Christ, thus enabling the fullness of spiritual life to be realized through faith. Such inwardness must, however, be saved from the snare of pietism by the universality of its aim, in correspondence with the world-purpose of Christ. Such spiritual universalism must, above all, be true to the redemptive meaning and purpose of the Gospel. It must not be ashamed of the Cross of Christ, or of anything that the Cross reveals or implies. Only through the forgiveness of sins and divinely-wrought regeneration can men enter the Kingdom of God. Yet the presentation of redemption must not be so rigid as to destroy the comprehensiveness of Christ. The restoration, fulfilment and satisfaction of human nature is the end of redemption. If we must " die to live," the life that is reached through this death enriches all

human powers and touches them to finer issues. Comprehensive sympathy is therefore one of the marks of the Christian spirit. With it goes the progressive temper, which is ceaselessly original and creative. True Christianity is ever making and remaking the world in accordance with the growing vision of the Divine ideal. Hence, finally, it becomes impossible to rely simply on past precedents or on external regulations. The continuity of Christian life is shown in its power to exhibit identity in and through difference; so to adjust itself to new conditions that the immanent sovereignty of its life is displayed. Its inmost unchangeableness is revealed by its free response to the changing conditions of secular progress. It is hard to combine in living unity and due proportion, inwardness, universality, redemptive power, broad comprehension, progressive sympathy, and consistent self-adjustment. The secret can only be conveyed by fellowship with Christ Himself, and by the baptism of that holy love which manifests itself naturally by unifying all these elements in a consistent temper that answers both to the truth of God and to the realities of life.

In proportion as this temper prevails its manifestation will have decisive results upon the Modern Social Problem. Spiritual inwardness will destroy the selfishness and greed of practical materialism. A truly universal aim will set free from subservience to any class or to sectional interests of any kind. Fidelity to the redemptive message of the Gospel will arouse the powers in human nature, without which no social reform can gain its full effect. Comprehensiveness of spirit, progressive sympathy, and self-adjusting power will enable the Church to rise above narrowness and adherence to the external precedents of the past,

so as to take a proper share in the reconstruction of society on more spiritual and social lines. The first consequence of all this will be that in teaching and in life the Christian Church will, if faithful, express and enforce the principles of universal brotherhood. While practical endeavours to give effect to these principles are being made by the State, the Church will bring to bear the inspiration of faith in the world-embracing and world-transforming purpose of Divine love, will call men to brotherly co-operation for the rescue of the weak and helpless, and will demand the self-discipline which gladly accepts the sacrifices that are necessary to this end. The primary call which the modern social problem makes upon the Christian Church as a whole, is for just this prophetic witness, in word and deed, by authoritative guidance and individual conduct, to the claims of human brotherhood as paramount, and as fixing the standard and goal for all effort in every sphere of life.

It is not necessary to speak in detail of the practical service which the Churches should render outside the field of public life. If the social problem cannot be solved on its economic and civic side without great spiritual inspiration and leadership, it is equally true that its solution will need unstinted personal and voluntary service rendered by the Churches themselves. Their most competent members should accept the burdens of public office. Their philanthropic societies should furnish greater assistance to civic administration, and should watch with ceaseless vigilance the course of public administration. The charitable endeavour of the churches should be keenly scrutinized to make sure that they are not retarding instead of advancing social reform. Churches must free themselves from being in their charitable endeavours

either the tools of interested parties or the instruments of a thoughtless and impulsive sympathy. Above all, the Churches must cultivate a genius of personal friendship, which will bring them into such relations with the poor, and especially with the young, as will make the good that is within reach seem desirable and attainable. Such friendship in club and institute, in guild and reading circle, may easily prove the turning-point in many lives, and may effectively raise the standard of life, without which all work done *for* others will be in vain. If such a ministry is to be exercised the Churches must establish the centre of their influence among the poor. The spiritual well-being of the rich will be served not less, but more, successfully if the governing ideal be to follow Christ in close contact with and far-reaching toil for and with the poor. The state of many Churches in the poorest populations is a disgrace to the common Christianity, showing a lack of energy, sympathy, and self-sacrifice on the part of the well-to-do, which reveals that, for many, the Christian religion is but a source of sentimental consolation or a conventional formality and not the enthusiasm of devotion to God and man.

All these practical consequences, and more, will result in ever-extending range and fullness from the deepening and spread of social sympathy. It is for the Churches so to extend their conceptions of Christian duty that Isaiah, if he could return to earth, would feel at home in them. What is needed is the constraining conviction that the social problem, as it exists to-day is, from every point of view, intolerable and disgraceful, that it is remediable, and that it is for Christianity to manifest the glory of its redemptive mission by freely giving the inspiration and sacrifice by which the remedy can be applied. The

unspiritual and the anti-social are one. The cure for both is in the proclamation and application of the two great Commandments, " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength" and " Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

I

Social Ideals in the Old Testament

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ARGUMENT.

Little Distinction in Israel between Church and State. Social and Religious Ideals Inseparable. Chief Bond between Israelites Loyalty to Yahweh. Growth of Social Ideal may be traced through Five Stages.

I. *Nomad Period.* Before the Conquest of Canaan Social Conditions simple and austere. Mutual Loyalty within the Tribe.

II. *Period before the Canonical Prophets,* from the Conquest to the beginning of the eighth century B.C. Change from Nomad to Settled Agricultural Life. New Feature of Social Life, the Bond between the Family and the Land. Large Class of Farmers owning the Land they tilled. Development of Political Organization. Rise in Standard of Living.

III. *Law and Prophecy in the Eighth Century* B.C. Growth of Luxury. Formation of Numerous Large States. Farmers driven from the Soil, become Landless Paupers. Protests of the Prophets. Attempts to secure Healthy Conditions by affirming Primitive Customs in Legal Codes.

IV. *Law and Prophecy in the last period of the Monarchy and during the Exile.* Previous Evils Continue. Protests from Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Renewed Attempts at Reform through Social Ordinances in Legal Codes. Deuteronomy, etc. Social Development checked by Invasion and Captivity.

V. *Period after the Exile.* Recrudescence of Former Evils. Attempts at Reform by Nehemiah and the Prophets. Social Ideal in Priestly Code, Liberty for all Israelites, and for each Family an Independent Means of Livelihood through the Ownership of Land.

VI. *Review.* Difference of Social Conditions necessitates Care in applying O. T. Principles to our Times. Prophets would have condemned Christendom for its failure to develop a Righteous Social System. O.T. seeks Energy for Reform in Love to God and one's Neighbour. Social Reform to-day hindered by Mutual Antagonism of the Churches. For Social Reform we need Alliance of Social and Religious Enthusiasm and Co-operation of the Churches. Failure to secure Social Righteousness means the Ruin of Christian Civilization. Our hope is in the Spirit of Christ.

I

Social Ideals in the Old Testament

In Israel, as in the ancient world generally, society was essentially religious ; the ritual of public worship and private devotion were included amongst social duties ; and what we should call secular law and custom were enforced by religious sanctions as being part of Revelation. The good citizen would sacrifice and pay tithes and observe the Sabbath ; and on the other hand the regulations as to the punishment of criminals or the conduct of war had been made known by God to priests, prophets and lawgivers. But in writing to-day of a Social Ideal we shall be chiefly occupied with secular and ethical subjects ; we shall not attempt to determine the belief or the forms of worship of the ideal society ; nor shall we attempt—at any rate in this particular essay—to lay down an exact dogma as to the relation of social principles to religious sanctions. Nevertheless, it is impossible, especially in dealing with the Old Testament, to ignore altogether the place and influence of religion in society ; and the plan of this volume includes the consideration of the attitude of the Church to social questions. In Israel, however, the modern distinction between Church and State had not arisen ; Israel,

as a whole and in all its individuals, was a religious, just as much as a political, unity. In practice there were many beginnings of what we should call a divergence of Church and State, but these were regarded as failures to maintain the National Ideal, a view upheld by the law and the prophets. It was taken for granted that the religious organs of the community—king, priests and prophets—would determine the conditions of social life.

The inspired leaders of Israel always looked forward to the coming of the Kingdom of God; they expected that the frail and sinful Israel of their experience would be transformed by the grace of God into an ideal society. They had glowing visions of the future glory of the righteous nation; and they did their best by teaching, law-giving and administration to train the Israelites to be worthy citizens of the Kingdom. Hence the Old Testament is largely occupied with the setting forth of a Social Ideal, of which we must attempt some slight sketch in the following pages.

It will be convenient for our purpose to divide the history of Israel into five periods: (i) The Nomadic Period, from the rise of the Israelite people till the Settlement in Canaan; (ii) The period before the Canonical Prophets, from the Settlement to about the beginning of the eighth century B.C.; (iii) The Later Monarchy, with special reference to the prophets of the eighth century and the earlier laws; (iv) The close of the Monarchy and the Exile, with special reference to Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Deuteronomy; (v) The Post-exilic Period, with special reference to the Priestly Legislation and the Wisdom Literature.

i. The Nomad Period.

Before the Conquest of Canaan, Israel was a confederation of nomad tribes, and until the Fall of Jerusalem, at any rate, part of the population in the border lands to the south and east continued to lead a nomad life. The Israelites always had much to do in the way of trade and war with the roving Bedouin of the surrounding deserts. It was natural therefore that their religious and social life should be profoundly influenced throughout by conditions under which it first arose, and with which it was always in close contact. Israel brought lofty ideals from the desert, and when the nation had fallen upon evil times, many looked back to these early days as to a Golden Age when life was simple, pure and noble, and men were loyal to their kinsfolk and their God.[1] In some matters the Israelites always thought and spoke in terms of the nomad life ; an army dispersed to its homes to the cry of " To your *tents*, O Israel ! " and the priestly writers after the Fall of the Monarchy drew up their code of laws in terms of the wilderness, the camp and the Tabernacle, doubtless following established precedent.

The social conditions of nomad life are simple and severe. A Bedouin tribe wandering with its flocks and herds from pasture to pasture cannot obtain many luxuries ; it is inured to hardship, and trained in the primitive virtues of courage and patriotism. Such a society is virtually a large family, and can only exist by the mutual loyalty and devotion of the clansmen. Their dependence on one another

[1] E.g., Jeremiah ii. 1–3. A less favourable view of this period is also taken in the Old Testament; and is the view with which most of us are more familiar.

in the face of danger and difficulty checked alike insubordination and tyranny.

The virtues of the nomad are chiefly to be looked for in his dealings with his fellow-tribesmen; as far as others are concerned, it may be said of him, as of his prototype Ishmael, that "his hand is against every man, and every man's hand is against him." Yet this is not wholly true of his attitude to strangers; Arab hospitality is proverbial, and has its roots in a humane sense of brotherhood. For in the life of the desert changes of fortune are sudden, violent and frequent; witness the example of Job. Thus the wanderer, helpless, unprotected and destitute, is welcomed, partly because his host may soon be in like extremity himself. Similarly the ordinary traveller receives entertainment, which the sheikhs look for themselves when their affairs take them from the encampments of their own tribes. But it is significant that the name of the guest may not be asked, lest there should prove to be a blood-feud between his tribe and his entertainers.

Again, when tribes are allied because they count kinship, or on any other ground, there is not only the sense of duty to fellow-tribesmen, but that of obligation to allies, and the community has its responsibilities as well as the individual.

As the Israelites of our first period formed a loosely confederated group of Bedouin clans or tribes, they handed down to later generations traditions of a simple life and of mutual loyalty and helpfulness amongst fellow-citizens. Moreover the chief bond which held the tribes together was their common devotion to Yahweh, the God of Israel.

ii. The Period before the Canonical Prophets.

The Conquest of Canaan brought about a complete change in the social conditions of most of the Israelite clans. From a group of nomad tribes they became in time a nation of what we should call yeoman farmers and peasant proprietors; or in other words they lived by agriculture, and the land was owned by those who cultivated it; the words "landlord," "tenant," and "rent" are unknown to the Old Testament. The conquest involved a change from a wandering life in tents to a settled life in houses; and also what we should call a rise in the standard of living; the possibilities in the way of comfort and luxury were increased, and in such matters men come to feel that they want all they can get.

We shall only deal briefly with the social conditions of this period because we shall have to refer to them again when we consider the ideals of the early prophets and lawgivers; but we must spend a few words on the leading points just referred to.

First as to social organization: Israel, as we have seen, entered Palestine as a loosely connected group of clans or large families; and this system was the starting point for the new order. For the most part each clan [1] settled together, in the same district, and maintained for a while the old family feeling. But family or clan feeling gradually degenerated to mere local feeling, and the interests of neighbouring farmers are by no means so identical as those of members of

[1] We use "clan" as an elastic word; it may be loosely understood to mean a subdivision of the "tribe," as we use that word in the phrase "The Twelve Tribes." The "clan," the Hebrew *mishpāḥā*, often translated "family," might vary from a score to a thousand or more "families," as we understand the word.

the same nomad tribe. Moreover in most districts the Israelites mingled with the native population, and gradually the two amalgamated into a more or less hybrid race. The conquering nomads found the land thickly strewn with fortified places; and as they were involved for centuries in a struggle for existence with their neighbours, they very largely settled in these walled towns and villages, and also added new ones to their number. Thus the district, the village, or the town took the place of the clan, and there was a beginning of city-life.

Instead of the clan, as in the desert, the family became the social unit; but it was the family in a larger sense than we commonly give to the word; it was not merely a married couple and their children; but would often include a man, his mother, his wives, his children, sometimes also his sons' wives and their children, his slaves and others living under his protection.[1] While a man's mother lived she would be the head of the harem or women's apartments.

These changes distributed, so to speak, the old family feeling on a large scale, the clan feeling. The larger share went to the smaller family just described; and, as elsewhere in antiquity, family ties, the sense of mutual affection, confidence, duty and responsibility remained one of the strongest social forces. The recognition of clan kinship persisted in some measure, at any rate, for a time, but was largely replaced by neighbourliness towards fellow-townsmen and those living in the same district, citizenship on the smaller scale. There was also a gradual growth of patriotism, the sense of membership of the nation,

[1] The *ger* or resident alien, perhaps originally also in some cases a member of another Israelite clan, is constantly referred to as a member of the household.

Israel ; but as political union was not fully accomplished in this period, the chief bond between Israelites as Israelites remained that of religion, loyalty to Yahweh, the God of Israel.

By the settlement in Canaan a new element was added to the family, namely its land, the homestead and the farm. For the most part a free Israelite family is thought of as holding land ; for the farm or estate was not the absolute property of the occupant for the time being ; he could not dispose of all rights in it. The land came to be considered a sacred and inalienable gift of God. Thus when Ahab wished to buy Naboth's vineyard, Naboth refused with the words, " Yahweh forbid that I should give thee the inheritance of my fathers " ; and Jezebel could only get the vineyard for her husband by having Naboth put to death on a criminal charge.

A similar bond existed between the tribe or clan and the district which it occupied, and men soon came to feel that there was an organic union between the Holy Land, the Chosen People, and their God.

Our information is too scanty to enable us to construct a complete picture of Israelite society in this period. But amongst the handful of men and women who make brief appearances on the stage of history, we discern a few wealthy nobles like Barzillai, Nabal and Shimei. We also observe well-to-do families, whose members take their share in the work of the farm ; Saul goes to look for his father's asses, David feeds his father's flock. Probably such families were the largest class in the Israel of our period, comfortable, middle-class folk, as we should say. Extreme poverty would be almost unknown ; even slavery was comparatively mild.

There was in the earlier part of this period a mini-

mum of government, law, and police. Later writers mark the contrast between their own times and the period of the Judges, "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes."[1] The chief secular authorities were the local sheikhs and the leaders specially appointed for war. But these were reinforced and supplemented by religious custom and priestly oracles.

For many years after the Conquest the Israelites were exposed to constant attacks from the yet unsubdued Canaanites, from the nomads of the surrounding deserts, and from the Philistines and other enemies; there were no properly organized national military forces, so that there was little assurance for life, liberty or property. The establishment of the monarchy gave greater security against external enemies, but involved a certain amount of taxation, partly in the form of the *corvée* or forced labour on public works. Thus Solomon's exactions of labour for the Temple, and his other buildings, the "grievous yoke" which he laid upon his people,[2] were one cause of the Secession of the Ten Tribes. Internally the increase in the power and activity of the government no doubt did something to protect the weak against the strong, though we do not read of any such beneficence; but probably the machinery of the State was more widely used to enable nobles and officials to aggrandise themselves at the expense of the small farmers. Naboth, no doubt, had fellow victims; and lesser men, according to their power and opportunity, imitated Ahab and Jezebel.

iii. Law and Prophecy in the Eighth Century B.C.

After a while things mended a little, and the

[1] Judges xxi. 25. [2] 1 Kings xii. 4.

Israelites were less harried by raids and invasions. For long periods there was peace between Israel and Judah, and probably the severe struggle in which several successive kings of Israel were engaged with the Syrians of Damascus was not without advantages for Judah. But in the course of the ninth century B.C. the renewed activity of Assyria in the lands between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean crippled Damascus, and Israel and Judah alike were left without any formidable enemies in their immediate neighbourhood, and flourished accordingly. More especially Israel under Jeroboam II, B.C. 783–743, attained to something like the splendour and power of the reign of Solomon.

At the best the modern capitalist would have regarded Israel as a doubtful sphere for the exercise of his energies; any ventures there would have been felt to be of a highly speculative nature, from which a correspondingly liberal profit would be expected in case of success. Nevertheless there was a considerable measure of material progress; it is wonderful how great an advance in civilization may result from even a modicum of continuous settled order. This material progress involved many social changes, of which the most important was the break-up of the old land system. A strong government meant heavy taxation, and the requisitioning of the labour of the poorer farmers and their cattle for public works in time of peace, and for military service in time of war. These burdens, combined with bad seasons, and losses suffered from foreign enemies, plunged the farmers into debt, which finally resulted in the transfer of their land to wealthy creditors and sometimes in the enslavement of the debtor and his family.[1] In other

[1] 2 Kings iv. 1. The statements in the previous sentences are

ways also, legitimate and illegitimate, the land came to be largely held in great estates; the sacred bond between the family and the land was broken; and there arose a landless class, which tended to sink into slavery, pauperism, or crime. At the same time, however, many of the dispossessed farmers would betake themselves to the towns, and some might become artisans. On the other hand the wealthy families were often given up to callous, self-indulgent luxury. Of course a large measure of family feeling and patriotism survived, but their influence was weakened by mutual distrust and dislike of one class towards another.

In the latter half of the eighth century B.C. a determined attempt to check the growth of social corruption was made by Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah and those associated with them. About the same time, perhaps somewhat earlier, another attempt to promote social well-being was made by publishing the brief codes of laws included in the earlier documents of the Pentateuch, notably the *Book of the Covenant*.[1] The legislation and the prophetic teaching both sought the same ends, nor was either of them revolutionary. Rather both of them sought to maintain or to restore the ancient social ideals of Israel—doubtless with modifications and improvements suited to altered circumstances. We will consider, therefore, what contributions towards a social ideal are made by the early laws and by the prophets of the eighth century.

Let us turn first to the Laws. These assume the ordinary social conditions of ancient times, rich and

partly theoretical deductions from the known facts; but cf. Neh. v., which will be dealt with later on.

[1] Exodus xx. 22–xxiii. 33. Some parts, however, of these chapters may be later than the time with which we are now dealing.

poor, freemen and slaves; and they do not attempt to change the social system. In some matters the harsh customs of primitive times are endorsed; e.g. punishment by mutilation, "eye for eye, tooth for tooth." [1] If a man beats his male or female slave to death, he is not to be punished, unless the victim actually dies under his hand, "for he is his money." [2] But efforts are made to secure an impartial administration of justice,[3] to alleviate the lot of slaves, and to render some help to the poor.

Thus a Hebrew was not to be compelled to remain in slavery for more than six years [4]; if a slave died under the rod, his master was to be punished; [2] and if an owner deprived his slave of an eye or a tooth, the sufferer was to be emancipated. Money is to be lent to the poor gratis, the taking of interest being forbidden; and a garment received as a pledge is not to be kept overnight.[5]

The code contained in the *Book of the Covenant*, short and incomplete as it is, worthily upholds the great Semitic principles of social justice formulated by the Babylonian king Hammurabi hundreds of years before, and maintains the kindred tribal ideal of mutual helpfulness, service and loyalty. The latter finds striking expression in the exhortation, "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him." [6]

[1] Exodus xxi. 24.
[2] Exodus xxi. 20, 21. [3] Exodus xxii. 21–24, xxiii. 6–9.
[4] Exodus xxi. 2. [5] Exodus xxii. 25–27.
[6] Exodus xxiii. 4, 5. By the "enemy" and "him that hateth thee" we must understand fellow-Israelites.

In the same spirit the prophets utter their inspired protests against the growing tendency by which the resources of the community were made to serve chiefly the pride and luxury of wealthy nobles. Isaiah and his contemporaries denounce in no measured terms the way in which the machinery of government, official status, the administration of so-called justice, were used to enable the authorities to rob and ill-treat their fellow-countrymen. Thus—" Seek justice, relieve the oppressed, vindicate the rights of the fatherless, plead for the widow." [1] And again," Yahweh will enter into judgment with the elders and princes of his people : It is ye that have eaten up the vineyard ; the spoil of the poor is in your houses : what mean ye that ye crush my people, and grind the face of the poor ? This is the Oracle [2] of the Lord, Yahweh Sebaoth," [3] and again

> Woe unto those who set up unjust decrees,
> And the scribes who busily write oppression
> To turn aside the helpless from judgment,
> And to despoil the wretched of my people of their rights
> That widows may be their prey,
> And that orphans may be their plunder.[4]

Amos sets in the forefront of the unpardonable sins of Israel the guilt incurred, " because they have sold the innocent for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes." [5] In Samaria " they store up violence and robbery in their palaces." [6] So too Micah, " Hear,

[1] Isaiah i. 17.

[2] The Hebrew word *ne'um*, EV " saith," is an emphatic epithet, asserting that the preceding is an inspired message from God.

[3] Isaiah iii. 14, 15.

[4] Isaiah x. 1, 2, the translation is Cheyne's in the *Polychrome Bible.*

[5] Amos ii. 6. [6] Amos iii. 10, cf. iv. 1, v. 11 f., viii. 5 f.

I pray you, ye heads of Jacob, and rulers of the house of Israel: is it not for you to know judgment? You, who hate the good and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from them, and their flesh from off their bones; who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones; yea, they chop them in pieces as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron. . . . The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money . . . therefore shall Zion be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the Temple Hill as the high places of a forest." [1]

A similar protest is made against the ostentation, self-indulgence and debauchery of the nobles. They were rolling in wealth, and they are condemned because they were proud and haughty,[2] drunken,[3] flaunting their vices before man and God, "they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not."[4] The great ladies, the leaders of fashion in Jerusalem, were tarred with the same brush as their husbands; they were haughty and wanton.[5] The widespread social corruption presented another feature which the prophets unhesitatingly condemned, the change in the land system, a change by which the free Israelite farmers were being driven off the land, in order that it might be held in large estates by a limited class. Thus Isaiah, "Woe unto those who join house to house, who add field to field, till there is no more room, and ye are settled alone in the midst of the land." [6] The language suggests something corresponding to our great

[1] Micah iii. cf. Hosea xii. 6–8.
[2] Isaiah ii. 7–17.
[3] Isaiah v. 11, 22.
[4] Isaiah iii. 9.
[5] Isaiah iii. 16.
[6] Isaiah v. 8, Cheyne's translation, *Polychrome Bible.*

mansions standing isolated in their square miles of park. Micah too denounces those who when they find themselves in power "covet fields and seize [redacted] and houses and appropriate them; they [redacted]n and his house, even a man and his herit[redacted]. "the women of my people ye cast from [redacted] pleasant houses." [1]

Moreover just as the prophetic literature asserts the rights of the actual cultivator as against the landlord, so also it emphasizes the dignity of the farmer's calling. His skill and traditional lore have been given by divine inspiration; they come from "the Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in wisdom." [2]

The prophetic protests against the social decadence of their age might be summed up in the pictures of an ideal State and an ideal Ruler; the just King, divinely inspired to protect the poor and the oppressed. [3]

It might of course be said that such ideals were commonplace, merely expressing an universal aspiration, and further that the movement against which the prophets protested was an inevitable social and economic development, a natural stage in the advance of civilization; and that the misery by which it was accompanied was only the suffering necessarily incidental to national progress. But the cardinal wickedness which the prophets condemn is really the iniquitous distribution of the gain and loss arising out of the social changes; the profit mainly falls to a limited class of nobles and officials, callous, self-seeking and self-indulgent; and deepens their moral deterioration; while the loss is borne by the poor and helpless. At the same time a community of

[1] Micah ii. 2, 9.
[2] Isaiah xxviii. 29.
[3] Isaiah xi. 1–9.

independent freemen was passing into one of plutocrats and their dependents.

Perhaps the prophets hoped for some good effect from the codes of law which attempted to protect the ancient order; but, at any rate, they were clear that a nation which sacrificed the people to the pride and vice of its nobles could not endure; it must perish by the judgment of God.

iv. Law and Prophecy in the last period of the Monarchy and during the Exile.

We cannot say how the social movement would have developed if Israel had remained prosperous and matters had been allowed to take their natural course without interference from outside. As it was, the material advance of both nations was cut short by foreign conquest, and the doom pronounced by the prophets was speedily fulfilled. During the lifetime of Isaiah the Northern Kingdom was carried captive by the Assyrians; and Judah underwent a similar fate at the hands of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar about 140 years later. In the interval Judah suffered much, first from the Assyrians and then from the Babylonians. There were, indeed, brief periods of peace and comparative prosperity tempered by the necessity of paying a heavy tribute to the suzerain power. But the land was again and again harried by ruinous invasion, the country was laid waste, towns were sacked, Jerusalem itself was frequently besieged and more than once taken, and numbers of the population were carried away as slaves. Sennacherib, for instance, claims that in one campaign, that of B.C. 701, he captured forty-six of the towns of Judah and carried off 200,150 persons, "small and great, male and female," besides innumer-

able horses, mules, asses, camels and cattle. These misfortunes may have served, in some measure, as a moral and spiritual discipline, and the reforms of Josiah in B.C. 621 aimed amongst other things at an improvement of social conditions. But little was really effected, and we gather that the nobles who exploited national prosperity also contrived that the burden of disaster should chiefly fall on the weak and helpless.

But if there was little or no amelioration in the actual condition of society, but rather the reverse, yet the inspired prophets and lawgivers still maintained and developed their ideals of social righteousness, and did their best to realize them as far as circumstances permitted.

The most important laws of this period are found in the legal portion of *Deuteronomy*, chapters xii–xxvi, in the *Law of Holiness*, Leviticus xvii–xxvi,[1] and in Ezekiel xl–xlviii. Speaking generally, these documents are a development from the laws of the previous period, as set out in the *Book of the Covenant*;[2] and *Deuteronomy* and the *Law of Holiness* may be said roughly to be enlarged and emended editions of the earlier code. There is nothing revolutionary—"the poor shall never cease out of the land"[3]—but a renewed attempt to secure the well-being of the people under the existing social system by maintaining all that was beneficent in ancient custom, by purging the system of its corruptions and by introducing desirable reforms.

The provisions, both of *Deuteronomy* and of the *Law of Holiness*, attempt to deal with the pauperism, the driving of the farmers from the land, and the

[1] And some other passages.
[2] Cf. p. 54.
[3] Deut. xv. 11.

other social evils, which arose towards the close of the Monarchy. The permission given[1] to persons passing through a vineyard or a cornfield to eat their fill of fruit or grain, was probably in accordance with established custom; and this may also have been the case with the injunctions that portions of the harvest, of the vintage and of the produce of the olive plantations should be left for the poor,[2] and that the resident alien, the orphan and the widow should enjoy the hospitality of the well-to-do at the feasts.[3] Here and elsewhere, however, it is difficult to say how much is ancient usage and how much is new.

It is an indication of the changes in social conditions and of their vicious character that we meet with references to free labourers, "hirelings," which show that it was necessary to protect them not merely from sweating but from delay in the payment of their wages.[4] Another indication of the sympathy of this legislation with the poor is the provision that a runaway slave shall not be returned to his owner, but shall be allowed to settle wherever he chooses, and shall be well treated.[5] The necessity for such regulations throws a lurid light on the character of the Israelite plutocracy, and helps to explain the dislike shown by the inspired writers to the accumulation of great wealth—a feeling illustrated by the fact that even the king is forbidden to possess many horses or wives, or much gold and silver.[6] *À fortiori* the nobles might be expected to content themselves

[1] Deut. xxiii. 24 f.
[2] Deut. xxiv. 19 f., Lev. xix. 9 f., xxiii. 22.
[3] Deut. xvi. 11–14.
[4] Deut. xxiv. 14 f., Lev. xix. 13. [5] Deut. xxiii. 15.
[6] Deut. xvii. 16 f.

with moderate means. On the other hand, the prosperous man is exhorted to help those who have fallen into poverty; and if the ruined farmer is compelled to part with his liberty, he is not to be treated as a slave but as a free labourer.[1]

But the most remarkable of these attempts to avoid alike destitution and congested wealth, is the institution of a "release" at the end of every seven years.[2] The cancelling of debts, when social conditions had become intolerable, was a familiar resource of revolutionary leaders in the Greek and Roman republics. Its great drawback was that it was an uncovenanted breach of legal contracts. The Deuteronomic "release" was an attempt to obtain the relief afforded by such measures without their disadvantages. The *Book of the Covenant*[3] had already directed that Israelite slaves should be released at the end of six years; *Deuteronomy*[4] repeats this ordinance, but further ordains that all debts shall be cancelled at the end of every seven years. But nevertheless the rich are not to hesitate to lend, but are to open their hands to their needy brethren. Thus relief would be given to the unfortunate on a clear legal understanding, without, the breach of faith involved in the revolutionary cancelling of debt amongst the Greeks and Romans. As we shall see in the next section, this "release" as a permanent institution was impracticable; but the proposal shows that the legislator cherished social ideals, according to which the prosperous man was bound, even at the cost of serious sacrifice, to see that his less fortunate neighbour was not left in a state of hopeless poverty.

[1] Lev. xxv. 35–39. [2] Deut. xv. 1. [3] Page 54.
[4] Deut. xv. The law of the Jubilee, Lev. xxv. 8 ff., is not part of the original *Law of Holiness*; see next section.

For the prophetical teaching of this period on social matters we have chiefly to rely on Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The Fall of Jerusalem and the Captivity diverted men's minds from social questions to international politics, so that the great Prophet of the Exile, the author of Isaiah xl–lv, and others [1] have little that concerns our subject.

As in the earlier prophets, we still find emphatic testimony to the principles of social righteousness, and indignant protests against their violation. Ezekiel, for instance, in describing the righteous man whom God approves, speaks of him as one who "hath not wronged any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment, hath not lent upon interest, neither hath taken any increase, hath executed true justice between man and man." [2] This prophet also sets forth in striking figures the iniquity of social evils that are only too persistent. "The shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my sheep," [3] in other words, the governing classes, legislators, administrators, judges, did not use their authority to promote the welfare of the people, but rather made and administered laws and carried on the government with a view to aggrandizing themselves at the expense of the people. Another figure shows in a very clear light how able, wealthy, or powerful men not only clutched for themselves all that was most desirable in the way of comfort or luxury, but also by their wanton waste and callous greed spoiled what little they left for their less fortunate countrymen. "Seemeth it a small thing unto you to have fed upon the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet

[1] Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Obadiah.
[2] Ezek. xviii. 8. [3] Ezek. xxxiv. 8.

the residue of your pasture? Seemeth it a small thing unto you to have drunk of the clear waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet? And as for my sheep, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet, and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet." [1] The social conditions were such that the rich purchased their luxury by depriving the poor of the opportunity of a decent and wholesome life. Ezekiel unsparingly condemns the system, and the well-to-do people who were content to profit by it.[2] The prophets also condemn a particular form of this evil, the *corvée* or forced labour, a specially iniquitous kind of taxation imposing heavy sacrifices on the poorest classes. Jeremiah denounces a certain king of Judah because he used "his neighbour's service without wages, and gave him no hire." [3]

Another burning social question, that of land tenure, has also left traces on the prophetical literature of the period. The sanctity of the bond between an Israelite family and its land is illustrated by the fact that in the death-agony of Jerusalem, just before the final catastrophe, Jeremiah exercised his right of preemption in order to prevent a field going out of the family.[4] And on the other hand the reckless disregard of these sacred ties by the kings and their courtiers is shown by Ezekiel's ordinance [5] that the prince shall not expel the people from their land.

An episode in the life of Jeremiah shows not only how the primitive social ideals were cherished by the prophets, but also how they were set at nought

[1] Ezek. xxxiv. 17 ff.
[2] Cf. Jer vii. 6, xxii. 3; Ezek. xxii. 7, 8, 29.
[3] Jer. xxii. 13.
[4] Jer. xxxii. 6–15.
[5] Ezek. xlvi. 18.

by the nobles. The *Book of the Covenant*, as we have seen,[1] ordained that no Hebrew should be kept in slavery for more than six years; but in Jeremiah's time this law had become a dead letter. When, however, the Chaldeans were pressing the siege of Jerusalem, and the city was at the last extremity, the King Zedekiah, the princes and the people entered into a covenant to emancipate their Hebrew slaves, and accordingly they were set free. By thus fulfilling the ancient law, they hoped to propitiate Yahweh and avert the threatened calamity. Apparently, they were not disappointed; for a time, at any rate, the siege was raised. When the danger seemed to be over, the King, princes and other slave-owners forthwith resumed possession of the slaves whom they had solemnly emancipated. According to Jeremiah this was the final, unforgiveable offence which rendered the Captivity inevitable.[2]

v. The Period after the Exile.

The Return of the Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem was a new departure rather than a restoration of the old order. Henceforth, until the Old Testament was practically complete,[3] the Jewish community in and about Jerusalem was a subject portion of some heathen empire, Persian or Greek; it had a measure of home-rule, sometimes more, sometimes less. Within a strictly limited sphere the Jews had social privileges, duties and opportunities; but they were burdened by heavy taxation imposed by a foreign government, and more or less harassed by

[1] Page 55. [2] Jer. xxxiv. 8–22.

[3] As far as our subject is concerned. A few portions of the Old Testament were written after Jewish independence was restored by the Maccabees, but they have no importance for the social ideals of the Old Testament.

the oppressions and exactions of foreign officials. Thus the free social development of Israel was no longer possible, so that the imagination was at liberty to construct the picture of the ideal state without being hampered by the prosaic necessities of practical government. The New Israel was no longer to be looked for through the adaptation or transformation of an independent state in actual existence; but the New Jerusalem was to come down from God out of heaven.

The legislators of this period endorsed the older ideals by including the earlier codes in the complete Pentateuch[1] or *Torah*, which became the Bible[2] of the Jews. The newer laws[3] were conceived in the ancient spirit, except so far as their advocacy of social righteousness was weakened by insistence on the paramount importance of the exact observance of a minute and elaborate ritual.

But, at any rate, these later lawgivers clung tenaciously to the ancient idea of the sacred bond between the Israelite yeoman and his farm. Chapter after chapter[4] is taken up with an account of how the land of Palestine was divided by Divine Revelation amongst the tribes, clans and families of Israel. Thus the land of a family or clan was a sacred gift from God,[5] and the lawgiver did his best to secure

[1] First the authors of the *Priestly Code*, *c.* B.C. 400, included in their work the *Law of Holiness*, see p. 60. Then the *Book of the Covenant*, see p. 54, *Deuteronomy*, the *Priestly Code*, etc., etc., were all combined to form the *Torath* or authoritative Revelation, our Pentateuch.

[2] The Pentateuch was recognized as canonical before the other portions of the Old Testament, and has ever since been held in higher esteem by the Jews.

[3] *Priestly Code* and later portions of the Pentateuch.

[4] Joshua xiii.–xxi. [5] Cf. p. 51.

that it should be permanently held by those to whom God had given it. By the celebrated Law of Jubilee [1] it was enacted that the freehold, as we should say, could not be sold. Every fiftieth year all land which had been sold since the last Jubilee was to revert to its original owners. Such a law would have effectually prevented the formation of great estates, and would have secured the permanent existence of a class of yeomen farmers. In the same spirit it was enacted that heiresses should marry among their own kinsfolk.[2]

The Law of Jubilee was obviously impracticable and for the most part remained a dead letter; but an incident in the administration of Nehemiah shows that the Jewish leaders were sincerely anxious to apply the principles of the priestly legislation as to the tenure of land. We must bear in mind that Ezra and Nehemiah, wielding the authority of the Persian king, established the Priestly Code as the law of the Jews; Nehemiah was twice the Persian governor of Judah. After the Return an attempt had been made to restore the old order, by settling—for the most part at any rate—each family on its own land. But there was heavy taxation, and seasons were bad; many of the farmers borrowed money on mortgage; and soon the mortgages were foreclosed; and, as under the Monarchy, most of the land was appropriated by a few wealthy men, while the farmers and their families became landless paupers and some of them were sold into slavery. In their despair they appealed to Nehemiah; he remonstrated with the nobles, and when he found that remonstrance was not sufficiently effective "he held a great assembly against them"; or in other words, he called a general meeting of the Jewish community to put pressure

[1] Lev. xxv. 8–55, cf. p. 62. [2] Num. xxxvi.

on the offenders. He told them that he and his friends and followers had been doing their best to relieve the distress by buying and emancipating Jews who had been sold into slavery; and all the while his efforts were being thwarted by the greed of his fellow-countrymen who were making a profit by reducing their brethren to slavery. Nehemiah acknowledged that he and his friends had lent money at interest. We may well believe that the interest was moderate, and that the loans were made with a view to helping the borrowers. Nevertheless, Nehemiah proposed that he and all parties concerned should henceforth refrain from taking interest, and that the nobles should restore fields, vineyards, oliveyards and houses to their original owners.[1] Nehemiah was supported both by the authority of the Persian court and by the enthusiastic approval of the great majority of the Jewish assembly. The nobles had no choice but to consent. They promised to restore land and houses, and to do all that Nehemiah wished. He, however, feared that they might imitate their predecessors under Zedekiah,[2] and recall their promise as soon as the pressure of existing circumstances was removed. Accordingly he sent for the priests, and bound the nobles by a solemn oath; and he himself pronounced a curse upon them in case they should be faithless. In his own words, "I shook out my lap and said, 'So may God shake out every man from his house and from the fruits of his labour that performeth not this promise; even thus may he be shaken out and emptied.'

[1] The conditions of this restitution are not fully or clearly stated; but there is no doubt that the nobles made very heavy sacrifices, as far as their legal claims were concerned.

[2] Cf. p. 63.

"And all the assembly said 'Amen,' and praised Yahweh.

"And the people did according to this promise." [1]

We may notice that this incident illustrates the feeling of the Jews not only as to the family holding of land, but also as to slavery; the public conscience revolted more and more against the idea of a Jew being a slave. Nehemiah's suppliants pleaded, "Our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children are as their children."—Why then should their sons and daughters be sold into slavery? And Nehemiah accepted their plea. The influence of such feelings is also manifest in the Law of Jubilee. It is plain that the idea of Jews in bondage was repugnant to the authors of that law, though they felt it impossible to abolish such slavery altogether. They had to content themselves with doing their best to limit it as far as possible, and to mitigate its severity.[2] If a Jew is driven by poverty to sell himself as a slave, he is not to be treated as a slave, but as a hired servant or a resident alien.[3]

A similar spirit shows itself in the writings of the post-exilic prophets.[4] It is true that they, like the lawgivers, are very much preoccupied with the Temple, its priesthood and its ritual; but none the less they bear their testimony to social righteousness. The fast is worthless when the worshipper oppresses his labourers, and the true fast is not to bow down the head like a rush and to sit in sackcloth and ashes; but to loose the bonds of wickedness; and to let the

[1] Nehemiah v.

[2] Leviticus xxv. 39 f., 47 ff.

[3] *Ger.*

[4] Isaiah xxiv.–xxvii., lvi.–lxvi., etc.; Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Joel, etc.

oppressed go free; to feed the hungry; to house the outcast; and to clothe the naked.[1]

In this last period the Wisdom Literature[2] of Israel becomes important, and its witness is quite in harmony with that of the Law and Prophets. Job's noble picture of the Righteous Man[3] is one of the passages in which the teaching of the Bible reaches a climax; it presents an ideal which has never been surpassed. The righteous man uses his advantages of rank, power and wealth in the service of his less fortunate brethren. He is the helper of the poor, the fatherless and the widow; he is "eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and a father to the needy."[4] Again Job enumerates among the sins which draw down the wrath of God upon the wicked, contempt and neglect of the claims of slaves; and that a man should eat his morsel alone, while the fatherless go hungry.[5]

It is a little depressing to pass from the passion and pathos of *Job* to the "canny" shrewdness of *Proverbs* and the cynical pessimism of *Ecclesiastes*. Yet both imply that the true social order is based on mutual helpfulness, and suggest that if the ultimate and permanent condition of society is one in which the interests of the people are sacrificed to the pride, ostentation and self-indulgence of privileged classes, then, indeed, life is "vanity of vanities."

[1] Isaiah lviii. 3–8.

[2] *Job*, *Proverbs*, and *Ecclesiastes* in the Hebrew and Protestant Canon of the Old Testament.

[3] Job xxix., cf. xxxi.

[4] Job xxix. 11–16.

[5] Job xxxi. 17, 21.

vi. Review.

A recent writer [1] says, with much truth, that many take for granted that the social teaching of the Bible may be ignored because the social conditions [2] of our time are different from those of the beginning of the Christian Era, and are still more remote from those of Old Testament times. We plume ourselves on the advance of civilization, and scout the idea that we can learn from ancient prophets and lawgivers. It seems like expecting a sixth-form prefect to learn from a youngster in the second or third. We may illustrate the difficulty by two important matters which involve those moral considerations with which we are specially concerned—Does not the Old Testament accept slavery and polygamy? In a qualified sense it does. But for that matter, slavery flourished in Christian states far into the last century; and when one calls to mind the casual ward and the workhouse, the sweated industries and the unemployed, and Piccadilly at midnight, it is a perfectly defensible position that, for all practical purposes, the condition of labour and the status of women were better in the Judah of Isaiah than they are in England to-day; and that Jerusalem, even under Manasseh, was no worse than many of the great cities of Christian peoples.

Moreover whatever the defects of ancient Israel, we must remember that even inspired teachers have to start from things as they find them and to speak in terms of existing institutions. Nor do they sanction everything which they do not propose to alter; no sane reformer tries to set everything right at once;

[1] Köberle, *Soziale Probleme im alten Israel und in der Gegenwart*, pp. 1 f.

[2] *Kulturentwicklung.*

that is anarchism. Ideals have to be sought in men's positive teaching, not in what they seem to take for granted; and the positive teaching of the Old Testament, the changes it introduces into the existing order, are upward. We have seen [1] that there is a constant anxiety to improve the position of slaves and to limit slavery as much as possible. It is true that the lawgivers are chiefly concerned for Israelite slaves, but then a man's social ideals are naturally applied first to his own people. So too the whole tendency of Old Testament teaching is in favour of monogamy. At the Creation only one woman was provided for the first man; the patriarchal stories seem intended to illustrate the disadvantages of polygamy; and *Proverbs* might have been written for a purely monogamous people. It is difficult to imagine the Excellent Woman [2] sharing her authority with a rival.

If, however, these considerations show that the inferiority of the civilization of Israel is no reason for ignoring the teaching of the Hebrew Scriptures, they are equally conclusive against a wholesale application of texts in a literal sense. The practical remedies advocated by prophets and lawgivers were designed to meet the circumstances of their own people and their own age, and are not absolute laws binding on every one, everywhere, at all times. It is not too much to say that "It is wrong in principle to deduce without qualification from the Bible, Old or New Testament, any political, economic, hygienic or any other demand as to the external course of social life." [3] We must not, for instance, maintain that the Old Testament binds us to secure to the farmer the ownership of the land he cultivates. Such an arrangement

[1] Page 69.

[2] Prov. xxxi. 10–31;

[3] Köberle, p. 22.

may or may not be desirable ; in deciding such questions we should welcome any light the Hebrew Scriptures can afford ; but we must remember that there may be moral considerations which did not occur to the ancient prophets and lawgivers ; and also that economic laws and material circumstances cannot be ignored. It is still more evident that we cannot use isolated texts to show that some given social change must be made at once in some particular fashion.

This frank avowal clears the way for the legitimate application of inspired principles and ideals to modern needs ; for these principles and ideals are like the sun ; however circumstances may change, they still reveal their character and help us to deal with them.

The prophetic standard of social righteousness would emphatically condemn Christendom ; Isaiah and Jeremiah would have scouted the idea that we are merely the victims of circumstances, or that the social ills under which we labour are the inevitable results of inexorable economic laws. They would have found the root of the evil in moral corruption, in the callous selfishness which is rampant to-day as it was thousands of years ago. Now as then, they might have told us, eagerness to acquire, to increase, or to defend luxuries and privileges makes men indifferent to the misery and degradation of their fellows. Modern methods are not so crude as in ancient times. In England, at any rate, Naboth is not condemned by intimidated judges on notoriously trumped-up evidence, but the poor man loses his vineyard all the same. In spite of many changes in outward forms, if Ezekiel were here to-day, he might still declare that those who feed upon the good pasture

trample the residue, and that those who drink the clear waters foul the residue with their feet, so that the sheep have nothing to eat or drink except that which has been trodden down and befouled.[1] Nor would the Psalmist admit that his ideal of the Righteous King who is to do justice to the poor and save the needy [2] is realized by the rulers of modern Christendom.

But if our social system is found wanting when tried by these ancient standards, another question arises. How can Law, Prophets and Psalmists guide us in our search after a better way? How can they help us in our struggles for reform? Our thoughts at once turn to our Lord's answer to the inquiry, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets." [3] No word of Christ compels a more prompt and unqualified acceptance. And with regard to social evils we feel, as it has been well said, "The only safeguard is the diffusion of the spirit which loves one's neighbour as oneself, which is willing to consider the 'stranger' as well as the home-born, and which, in fact, regards the members of one's community with precisely the same trust, kindliness, forbearance and open-handedness as the members of one's own family." [4]

But one of the most serious difficulties of the

[1] Ezek. xxxiv. 18 f. [2] Psalm lxxii. 4.

[3] Matthew xxii. 36–40, R.V., quoted from Deut. vi. 5, Lev. xix. 18.

[4] Prof. W. F. Lofthouse, "The Social Teaching of the Law." *Expositor*, May, 1908, p. 468.

present situation is that those who are anxious to live according to this spirit find themselves baffled by a system which tends to reduce society to millionaires and their dependents, slaves in all but name, and without the compensations of slavery. Can the study of Hebrew ideals help us discover social reforms by which the spirit of Christ may be set free from its shackles and may have free course and be glorified ?

We are at once met with the difficulty that for devout Israelites the ideal society was alike Church and State, a society in which religion was the supreme bond. Whereas in Christendom religion is a divisive influence, and the mutual jealousy of the Churches paralyses the nation in its struggle against ignorance, misery and vice. This is not the place to discuss the question of organic reunion ; but is there no way by which sectarian quarrels may be limited to matters ecclesiastical, and the moral and religious forces of the country united in the crusade against social wrong ?

There is, however, another aspect of this difficulty. The ideal Israel, as we have said, was to be a religious society, such as the British Empire is little likely to become in the near future. Would the prophets have allowed us to hope for social progress under our present conditions ? The reader will find such subjects more fully dealt with in succeeding papers, but we may say a word or two. We may remind ourselves that for the prophets religious unity did not depend on the universal acceptance of the same set of abstract dogmatic propositions, and that they did not measure a man's loyalty to Yahweh by the frequency and regularity with which he observed religious rites, public or private. We are not even told that Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel expected true believers to

attend their prophesyings three times a week. May we not contend that the religious sentiment in some form and to some extent is universal? Possibly mutual sympathy and recognition between the Churches and those who are more vaguely and informally religious would be for the general advantage, would promote the growth of religion, and increase its influence.

On the other hand there is no lesson that is more clearly taught by the Old Testament than the importance of the spiritual life to social progress. In some form or other man's faith and love towards God and God's grace given to man are essential conditions of a nation's welfare. But, again, the prophets are equally emphatic in condemning devout men who are indifferent to social righteousness and neglect their duties as citizens.

In such matters the Hebrew Scriptures furnish us with many plain examples; thus the prophets and lawgivers are the champions of freedom; they constantly attempt to limit the extent of slavery and to mitigate its severity. Moreover their demand that the Israelite family shall be secured in the possession of land is an effort to make the people free in fact as well as in name. No one enjoys real liberty who can be deprived of the means of livelihood at the arbitrary will of an employer. In ancient Israel ownership of a farm was the natural way to provide a man with an independent and assured opportunity of earning a living for himself and his family. In our own times the application of the principles of prophetic teaching must take account of altered circumstances. It would be folly now to give every one land and expect him to take to farming. The evil against which Isaiah and Amos protested is appearing in a new form. The class who were their own masters—

yeomen, tradesmen, master workers, small manufacturers—is rapidly disappearing, and its members are being replaced by managers and foremen. There is a continual increase of the proportion of the population who are liable to be cast into the ranks of the unemployed through the avarice, the caprice or the malice of the heads of great commercial enterprises. Men who are thus helplessly dependent are not free, and were the prophets amongst us to-day they would renew their protests against industrial slavery.

Nevertheless, it does not follow that we ought to transfer the prophetic denunciation of Israelite oppressors to the ruling classes to-day. Nor need we conclude that the sentence of doom passed on Israel and Judah is also pronounced against Christendom. It is true that the ancient plague symptoms reappear now with equal virulence ; we are threatened with a plutocratic oligarchy, hitherto the harbinger of moral and material ruin. But our spiritual resources to-day are greater than those of ancient Israel. The leaven of the Kingdom of God is working in our midst. The experience of two thousand years has shown us that the Spirit of Christ, the influence of His teaching, His example and His personality, make for righteousness even more powerfully than the ministry of the Hebrew prophets.

But we must let this Spirit have free course. We are often told that we cannot curtail the luxury of the few in order to provide the many with the necessaries and decencies of life, because such a policy would bring about industrial ruin. But the unhesitating testimony of the Old Testament is that an awful and speedy Divine judgment awaits the people that acquiesces in national wickedness.

II

The Christian Ideal Revealed in Jesus.

By Rev. ALFRED E. GARVIE, M.A., D.D., Principal of New College, London.

ARGUMENT.

(1) The Religious Good of the Christian Gospel—Divine Fatherhood and Human Sonship.

(2) The Correspondent Human Duty—Love to God, and Love to Man as Likeness to God.

(3) Impartiality and Universality of this Love—The Good Samaritan.

(4) This Love Practical—The Last Judgment, The Unrighteous Steward, The Rich Man and Lazarus.

(5) The Guilt of Injury of Man measured by the worth of each Soul to God.

(6) Did Jesus institute the Church and the Sacraments ?

(7) Jesus' Conception of the Kingdom of God.

(8) His Attitude towards and Action in regard to the Existing Social Order in Church and State no Illustration of Permanent or Universal Principles.

(9) No Ready-Made Solutions of Social Problems, but Suggestive References to Social Relations and Institutions—The Family—Divorce.

(10) The Duty of Children to Parents taught by Jesus—His Treatment of Women and Children.

(11) The Economic Basis of the Family—Property—An Inference from Jesus' Teaching on the Family—His Refusal to Interfere in Dispute—Discouragement of Covetousness.

(12) The Influence of Riches and Poverty on the Soul—Poverty Advantageous and Wealth Dangerous—The Beatitudes—The Rich Fool, The Rich Man and Lazarus.

(13) Does Jesus discourage Industry ?—His References to the Relations of Master and Servant.

(14) Jesus' Teaching on Simplicity of Life not Ascetic—Total Abstinence —Not Indifferent to Aesthetic Aspect of Life.

(15) Does Jesus Condemn Government ?—Reasons against this View—Present Application of this Teaching.

(16) The Absence of Detailed Instructions a Proof of the Universality and Permanence of the Christian Religion—Contrast with Mohammed and Buddha.

(17) Did Jesus Foresee the Gradual Progress of the Kingdom ?—Christian Means and Ends of Progress.

(18) The Dependence of the Realization of the Christian Ideal on Personal Relation to Christ—Devotion and Duty.

II

The Christian Ideal Revealed in Jesus

(1) THE heart of the Christian Gospel may be found in the confession and the invitation of Jesus in Matt. xi. 25–30. His unique nature as the Son of God, known by the Father alone, and alone knowing the Father, and His unique vocation to reveal the Father to whomsoever He willeth qualify Him to offer to labouring and heavy-laden mankind rest of soul in learning of Him and taking His yoke, which is easy, because He Himself is meek and lowly in heart. His intimate communion with God is accompanied by an absolute dependence and a complete submission. As all things are delivered to Him by the Father, so He thanks the Father for whatsoever is well-pleasing in His sight. It is not necessary here to discuss the metaphysics of the Incarnation. The religious consciousness and the moral character of Jesus alike bear witness to a relation to God in which He is alone among and above all mankind. This relation, which is His by nature, it is His vocation to mediate for mankind by His grace. "The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father hath *so* declared Him," as to give to as many as believe "on His name the right to

become the children of God" (John i. 18, 12). The relation, which is original for Him, is mediated by Him for them, so that He who is the subject of the *religion of Jesus* becomes the object of faith in the *Christian religion*. He not only shows God as Father to men, but also brings men as children to God. He Himself reveals the divine Fatherhood by realizing the perfect sonship under the conditions and limitations of human life. The Divine Son who knows, loves, trusts, obeys God as Father is the Human Brother, so that through Him all the human brothers may become divine sons. He calls men to Himself that He may bring them to God. "Come to Me." "Learn of Me." "Take My yoke." "Follow Me." This is His invitation, for only in such close fellowship with Himself can men be brought into intimate communion with God.

There is, however, a hindrance which must be removed if His invitation is to be fully accepted; and He recognizes it; and, therefore, in His attitude and His assurance to sinners He removes it. He is the Friend of sinners (Matt. xi. 19). He calls not the righteous, but the sinners (ix. 10–13). He has the right on earth to forgive sins (verse 6); He welcomes the penitent with the words of pardon, "Thy sins are forgiven" (Luke vii. 48). The salvation which He offers to men involves His own sacrifice. He must give His life as a ransom for many (Matt. xx. 28), and the new covenant of grace is in His blood (xxvi. 28). Yet He, the Son of God, and, as the Saviour of men, the firstborn among many brethren, cannot be holden of death, but is raised from the dead, and becomes, as Mediator between God and men, the supreme authority and the universal presence. The divine Fatherhood revealed and the human sonship realized in and through Him are to be preached throughout the whole world in order that

the whole family of God may be brought home (xxviii. 18–20).

(2) This religious good, which is the priceless gift of Jesus to mankind, involves a correspondent moral duty. It claims not only the human faith which welcomes, uses and enjoys the divine grace ; but also the energy of that faith, its expression and exercise in love, grateful to God, and generous towards man. Jesus, coming as the Jewish Messiah, claimed to fulfil the law and the prophets, and in that fulfilment required that His disciples should exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, the commonly acknowledged and approved exponents, in theory and practice, of the law (Matt. v. 17–20). He unified, simplified, elevated and vitalized that law by summing it up in one principle—an absolute love to God and an equal love for self and others (xxii. 37–39). Although this principle was laid down in what might at first sight appear only as a casual answer to a hostile question, yet it necessarily results from, and is, therefore, in complete harmony with the essence of the Christian religion. The morality of a religion of divine Fatherhood and human sonship must be, and cannot but be, love. As God, manifest in the grace of Jesus, is altogether lovable, love to Him need not be enforced as a duty ; for it will be the spontaneous response to the grace that is received in faith. Jesus assumes that human gratitude will be the inevitable consequence of divine generosity. He who is forgiven much will love much (Luke vii. 47). He does not enforce the duty of absolute love to God in His teaching, not only because He is always exhibiting it in His life, but still more because He is always calling men to faith in God, and is confident that as men through faith freely receive the grace of God, so will they freely give in love to God.

It is otherwise, however, with the love to man which is enjoined. This is not a love of gratitude, but of generosity. Men are not to be loved because they are lovable. Jesus expressly contrasts the love which He requires of His disciples with natural affection, and with the love which is called forth, and is an answer to love (Matt. v. 46, 47). The fullest expression and the highest exercise of Christian love are required in regard to those who make it most difficult. Enemies and persecutors are to be loved (verse 44). Two reasons are given for this demand. The first is this, that fellowship with God is realized in likeness to God. He who enjoys a filial communion with God must show a filial resemblance to God. In order that the disciples may be the sons of the Father in heaven, they must display the same impartial affection as He does in sending sunshine and shower to all men alike (verse 45); only as they are peacemakers can they enjoy the blessedness of being called sons of God (verse 9); the perfection of the heavenly Father in loving is to be their ideal (verse 48); the second reason is that only the loving can apprehend, appreciate and appropriate the love of God. He who hardens himself against man closes himself against God. The merciful obtain mercy (verse 7); the forgiving are forgiven (vi. 14). So dependent is filial communion with God on filial resemblance to God, that they cannot enjoy God's grace who are without grace to others. So closely united are love to God and love to man.

(3) Besides this characteristic, which so closely connects religion and morality that love to God is shown and proved in love to man, Jesus assigns to this principle these other features. It is to be not only *impartial* as regards moral character, but it is also to be *universal*, unlimited by the common divisions among

men. This is brought out most clearly in the parable of *the Good Samaritan* (Luke x. 30–37). Just because there was kinship in blood and likeness in religion between Jew and Samaritan, was Jewish exclusiveness most uncompromising towards the Samaritan. It is to rebuke this racial hate that Jesus holds up a Samaritan as an example to be followed. Had He represented the Samaritan as the sufferer, and the Jew as the helper, Jewish pride would have been gratified; and the lesson of neighbourliness would not have been so effectively given. Jesus' limitation of His own ministry to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" does not disprove the universality of His love. It was necessary that the offer of God's grace should be first made to the people who had received a promise of it and a preparation for it. That Jesus might secure attention to His claims as Jewish Messiah, it was necessary that Jewish prejudice should not be provoked by any attempt to reach the Gentiles. Even when rejected by the Jewish people, Jesus was possessed by the conviction of the necessity of His death in Jerusalem at the hands of the Jewish nation; and He, therefore, did not turn to the Gentiles. His welcome and approval of Gentile faith show the wideness of His love.

(4) This *impartial* and *universal* love is to be *practical*. It is to be displayed in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick and the imprisoned. The parable of *The Last Judgment*, in Matt. xxv. 31–46, represents as the standard of judgment such acts of philanthropy. Those who have done these things are blessed, and they who have left them undone are accursed. That Jesus is here laying down a universal test is not disproved, as is sometimes argued, by two phrases in the parable. Even if the judgment described is that of "all the nations" (verse 32) in dis-

tinction from the Christian Church, a less measure of love will not be required of disciples. Their righteousness must exceed not only the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, but surely of the Gentiles also. The disciples are expressly required to forgive insult and injury ; and much more severely is love tested by such a demand than by this call to doing good. Even if the epithet "my brethren", applied to those benefited, meant believers on His name, and the parable was thus intended to encourage the disciples by the assurance that Jesus would regard their interests as His very own, this limitation, which is by no means certainly proved, does not justify the inference that it is only philanthropy to Christians which Christ will reward, or inhumanity to them which He will punish. Could He who commended the divine impartiality for imitation to His disciples have represented Himself as thus restricting His interest and sympathy ?

The same duty of philanthropy is enforced by the companion parables in Luke xvi., although it must be admitted that the interpretation of both is involved in some obscurity. The parable of the *Unrighteous Steward* (verses 1–9) appears to be intended to teach that the use of wealth in showing kindness and giving help to others will be rewarded in the future life (verse 9). More doubtful is the interpretation of the phrase *mammon of unrighteousness*, as " ill-gotten wealth." It is hard to believe that Jesus meant to teach, as Dr. Bruce maintains (*The Expositor's Greek Testament*, i, p. 586), that " the more ill-gotten the more need to be redeemed by beneficent use."

The parable of the *Rich Man and Lazarus* (verses 19–31) appears to convey the lesson that wealth used selfishly in indulgence and luxury to the neglect of the claims of the poor and the suffering will bring on the

possessor the severest condemnation. The only man whom Jesus in all His teaching pillories in the place of torment is the Rich Man, who left Lazarus unrelieved at his gate. It is necessary to point out that these promises and these rewards alike, presented in these parables, seem to appeal to a lower motive than love of others. As Jesus condemns the alms given in ostentation to gain " glory of men " (Matt. vi. 2), so doubtless He would have condemned any form of charity from self-interest only. We must recognize the inadequacy of the parable form to convey the truth completely. Jesus, when He thus speaks of rewards or punishments, presupposes the love of others which alone gives any moral value to acts of beneficence.

(5) Love will not only give all the help it can to others; it will be very careful not to do injury to others, especially by leading them into sin, or by hindering their faith. How very solemn is the warning against causing one of the little ones to stumble (Matt. xviii. 6). Whether the sayings which immediately follow in the First Gospel regarding the sacrifice to be made in order to avoid any offence refer to injury done to others may be questioned; but, even if the immediate reference be to the peril which sin brings on the sinner himself, yet it is a legitimate extension of the truth to apply it to injury to the souls of others. If a man is to love his neighbour as himself, he must be prepared at as high a cost to avoid his hurt even as his own.

The explanation of the severity of the demand here is to be found in Jesus' estimate of man. He taught the infinite worth of every soul. Not only is each man worth so much to himself that the gain of the whole world cannot compensate for the forfeit of himself, and that he has no possession he can offer as a ransom for himself (xvi. 26); but every man is worth so much

to God that his loss through sin grieves God, and his recovery brings God joy. This is the lesson taught in the parables in Luke xv. Such is the worth of each soul to God that Jesus came "to seek and save the lost" (Luke xix. 10). Whatever a man's character or condition, as a man, capable of becoming a son of God, and even in his sin loved by God, he has an infinite worth, and so an absolute claim to be so loved that his salvation shall be sought at any cost.

(6) The relation of God and man as the heavenly Father and the earthly child, and the relation of men to one another as brethren is the religious good Jesus offers, and love is the moral duty He enjoins. This is the broad and sure foundation for a Christian society; but on this foundation Jesus does not Himself rear the complete superstructure. The name by which the Christian society was afterwards known is only mentioned twice. In the commendation of Peter for his confession (Matthew xvi. 18–19), that confession is accepted as the foundation of *the Church*, to which is promised the power to resist all assaults, and to which is entrusted the stewardship of the Kingdom in its moral judgment of human actions. But no organization is prescribed. In the command regarding the treatment of an offending brother, a local organization of the Church, similar to that of the synagogue, seems to be assumed (xviii. 15–20). It must be added, however, that the authenticity of both passages has been challenged; the other Synoptics have no parallel, and there is no other indication in the teaching of Jesus that He ever spoke to His disciples about founding such a society. But even if we set aside these doubts, and accept these passages, they do not aid us at all in defining more distinctly the Christian social ideal.

Whether Jesus Himself instituted the *ordinance of baptism* into the threefold name (Matt. xxviii. 19) is regarded as doubtful by many scholars, who find in this passage a reflexion of contemporary belief and practice rather than a remembrance of past history. Even the intention of Jesus to establish a memorial feast in the ordinance of *the Supper* has been called in question. The narrative in Mark (xiv. 22–25) gives no indication that Jesus desired the acts to be repeated ; and in this respect Matthew (xxvi. 26–29) follows Mark. Luke's narrative (xxii. 14–20) is clearly influenced by the custom of the Apostolic Church. He adds the words, "This do in remembrance of Me." Paul's account (1 Cor. xi. 23–26) is quite evidently determined by the general practice of the Church. Absolute certainty seems in this matter quite unattainable ; but it is probable that the Christian community had some warrant in Jesus' teaching for these ordinances, which were recognized from its very beginnings. Jesus desired in these symbolic acts, these acted parables, to keep before His disciples the moral cleansing and the religious fellowship which He was ever offering to mankind. We can have little doubt, however, that He never intended them to become the formal, mysterious, supernatural sacraments into which ecclesiasticism afterwards changed them.

Were it proved, however, that Jesus said and did nothing to indicate His desire that His disciples should form themselves into a society, yet it could be confidently maintained that these disciples in effecting their union in the Church were moved and guided by His Spirit, were giving an inevitable application in the historical conditions to the essential principle of His Gospel. It was fitting and needful that those who felt themselves to be brethren, because they knew God

as Father, should come together for common witness, worship and work.

(7) But it must be asked, Can the Christian ideal of society be regarded as fully realized in the *Church*, the community of those who as disciples of Jesus and believers in Him have received His salvation? Jesus only twice (if at all) spoke of the Church; but there was a phrase constantly on His lips, *the Kingdom of God*. Those who are eager for social reform often seize upon this phrase as giving the sanction of Jesus to their social interpretation of the Gospel. It cannot be ignored, however, that not only the meaning of the term, but even the content of the conception is doubtful. Does *kingdom* mean *realm* or *rule?* In the former case the social aspect would be implied, in the latter not. Is the Kingdom *present* or *future?* Did Christ believe Himself to have established it at His first coming, or did He anticipate its establishment at His return in power and glory? Is it to come into the world by a *gradual progress* or by a *catastrophic act?* Is the means of its establishment moral and spiritual influence, or supernatural power? Texts can be quoted for each of these views. The obscurities, ambiguities and perplexities of the subject are all due to the fact that Jesus had to present the heavenly treasure of His own moral and religious ideal in the earthen vessels of prophetic predictions and popular expectations.

It is often assumed by scholars that Jesus was so completely a man of His own age and people that whatever in His teaching goes beyond or rises above the current conceptions must be regarded as an addition to His genuine utterances, a reflexion of the beliefs, hopes, and aims of the Christian Church at the time when the Gospels were composed. We may, in opposition to this view, press several questions. Is it prob-

able that Jesus did not conceive the Kingdom of God in as spiritual and ethical a form as would correspond with His perfect revelation of God and man? Is it probable that One whose religious consciousness and moral character so transcended the thought and life around Him was so closely bound by the common beliefs on a question of such moment for faith and life? Is it probable that the community of His disciples, so dependent on Him for what was truest in its beliefs and best in its deeds, so soon, even within a generation, outstripped Him in its conception of the Kingdom of God? The contrary assumption is very much more probable, that the conception of a present, ethical and spiritual relation of God to man, to be progressively completed and extended, was the kernel of Jesus' own teaching, and that the apocalyptic language in which it was expressed was but the husk, necessary to protect and preserve that kernel. When Jesus likens the Kingdom to the *treasure in the field* and *the pearl of great price* it is represented as an *individual possession* (Matt. xiii. 44–46). When He compares it to *the mustard seed* and *the leaven*, He so presents its *expansive power* and its *pervasive influence* as to suggest, but not more than suggest, that it is a *social benefit* (31–33). It must be admitted that Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God does not show that He intended any reorganization of human society, or what a reorganization in accordance with His principles would be.

(8) The results of our inquiry do not appear any more positive when we consider Jesus' attitude towards, and action in regard to the *existing social order in Church or State*. He was not the leader of a revolt; He was careful not to say or to do anything that would provoke a revolution. This caution was required of Him by the historical conditions. The popular expect-

ations were fixed on a political Messiah, one who would cast off the Roman yoke, and establish a prosperous and powerful as well as a righteous rule in Jerusalem. The temper of the people was very dangerous. A word or a deed of Jesus might have precipitated an explosion of the pent-up hate against the Roman oppressor. However repugnant to Jewish patriotism the Roman Empire was, and however oppressive its dominion might often prove to be, yet a Jewish rebellion could have ended only in the destruction of the nation. There was no promise or prospect of a new society to be founded on the ruins of the Roman Empire. It was not, however, merely prudent calculation that restrained Jesus' action. His words to Pilate, " My Kingdom is not of this world " (John xviii. 36) give the deeper reason. It was contrary to the essential character of His purpose that He should seek its fulfilment by any outward changes, ecclesiastical and political. Further, that it might be advanced as the *expanding mustard seed,* or the *pervasive leaven,* it must not needlessly be brought into conflict with any of the kingdoms of the world. His warning to Peter : " All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword " (Matt. xxvi. 52) discloses the reason for His submission to both ecclesiastical and political authorities.

These instances of conformity do not illustrate any permanent or universal principles of Christian action in Church or State. Under altered conditions opposition, or even defiance, may be as consistent with the Christian ideal as was Jesus' own submission. When conscience compelled Jesus to enter into conflict with the ecclesiastical authorities, He did not shrink from it, even though His own death was the inevitable issue. What His example does teach is that there may be conformity to the existing order in Church and State

wherever that with conscience, the claims of duty, or th . This conception of His Kingdom as n l has, however, permanent and universal Confidence in the power of truth, righteousness, grace to fulfil the ends of God is Christian. Reliance on the outward means of changes in organization, ecclesiastical or political, is not. This emphasis on the inward and indifference to the outward is probably the explanation of Jesus' having left the organization of the community of His disciples to be carried out after His Resurrection. While there is nothing in Jesus' teaching to forbid the use of the machinery of the Church or of the State to restrain vice, to relieve misery, to promote health and happiness, even to protect and preserve character ; yet we must not hide from ourselves that Jesus Himself was indifferent to the *mechanics* of outward organization, and was concerned about the *dynamics* of inward inspiration. Make the tree good, and its fruit will be good (Matt. vii. 20). Christ's method is to change character, and not to alter institutions.

(9) If this is His method, we shall go to Him in vain for any ready-made solutions of social problems. He reveals principles; He does not prepare programmes ; but it was inevitable that in a ministry so varied and in teaching so comprehensive as His He should touch on *social relations and institutions ;* and although it was never His intention to be a legislator, yet we shall find that He does, if not explicitly, yet implicitly, lay down principles of His Kingdom, which may be practically applied to our present perplexities and difficulties.

It is noteworthy that the *family* was the only social institution regarding which He gave very definite instruction. That He chose to describe the relation

between God and Man, revealed and realized in Him, by the family relationship of Father and Son is itself a most pregnant consideration.

In condemning the interpretation of the Jewish law by the Scribes, He took two of His instances from the family. The law of divorce was explained by many of the Scribes in such a way as to make it very easy for a man to get rid of his wife ; and the common practice was an encouragement to moral laxity. In the Sermon on the Mount, in close connexion with His condemnation of the lustful look as a commission of adultery in the heart, He condemns divorce as adultery. The husband who divorces his wife makes her an adulteress, and the man who marries the divorced wife becomes an adulterer. One ground for divorce is given in the clause " saving for the cause of fornication " (Matt. v. 31, 32). In another setting this same prohibition of adultery is repeated, although the language slightly varies ; and the justification of this teaching is given by an appeal to Scripture, to the intention of the Creator in making mankind male and female that there should be an indissoluble union of husband and wife, " What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder." In reply to the challenge that He was thus annulling a commandment of Moses, He laid down a general principle applicable to many other provisions of the Jewish law. " Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives " (xix. 3–9). In this passage, too, one cause for divorce is recognized.

In the parallel passages in Mark (x. 1–12) and Luke (xvi. 18) no mention of this exception is made. It is argued that the clause in the First Gospel is a gloss, intended to bring Jesus' teaching into harmony with the practice of the Church in this matter. It must be

admitted that the author of this Gospel, for whom the teaching of Jesus is the legislation of the new kingdom, does sometimes insert such explanatory clauses, without any intention to add to or take from the teaching, but only to make its meaning plain. It seems certain that Jesus did not intend to legislate ; and we put His words to another use than He intended if we look to them for the details of laws of divorce. The version in Mark seems to be the original, and here what is condemned is divorce, either by husband or wife, in order to effect a marriage with another. This apparently common motive of divorce is unhesitatingly condemned ; but there is nothing said as to whether there is or is not any legitimate ground for divorce. Luke's version combines part of Mark's and part of Matthew's, and is evidently secondary. The words as given in Matthew v. 32 are not at all as intelligible as Mark's version of the saying. Should not the man who divorces his wife be pronounced as himself guilty of adultery, instead of being charged with the offence of making his wife an adulteress, an offence which she could be guilty of only by her marriage to another man ? The version in Matthew xix. 9 is nearer Mark's, and expressly condemns not divorce merely, but divorce with a view to marrying another woman. As Jesus does not seem to be prohibiting divorce altogether, the exceptive clause in Matthew must be regarded as an explanation, added when the words of Jesus, which referred only to divorce for the sake of marrying another, were generalized into a law regarding divorce.

It seems altogether a vain dispute, although it has been long and hotly waged, whether Jesus does or does not make an exception to His prohibition of divorce, as His interest lay elsewhere, even in condemning one instance of scribal casuistry, which made it easy for

men and women to follow their own whims in temporary marriage relationships. The principle that Jesus does lay down is that the relation between husband and wife is intended by God to be so close that it is to be lifelong. Whether there are offences which so destroy the relationship as to justify the legal recognition that it has ceased to be Jesus nowhere expressly teaches. It may be added that His ideal of marriage does condemn as a heinous sin any moral laxity, any infidelity in fancy or feeling, and that it does require of every society which claims the Christian name that the sanctity of marriage shall be recognized in its laws as in its morals.

(10) The second instance of scribal casuistry which Jesus condemned was the ingenious device by means of which a son was relieved of the obligation to support his parents. All he had to do when his parents asked him for anything was to declare that that thing was dedicated to God, and he was exempted from his duty (Mark vii. 10–12). It would appear even that this dedication was not regarded as withdrawing the property from his own use. The duty of children to care for their parents Jesus affirmed as the law of God, and such attempts at evasion as traditions of men which made void God's word. These two instances prove how highly Jesus valued family life. There is no ground whatever in the teaching of Jesus for the assumption, on which the artificial piety of monasticism is based, that He regarded celibacy as superior to marriage, or the casting off of family relationships as better than the discharge of the duties that these relationships impose. It is true that He Himself did not marry ; but that is surely fully explained by the unique vocation He fulfilled and the unique relation He consequently sustained to all mankind. It is true also that He

left His home at Nazareth, withstood the interference of His family with His ministry, and, even when the claims of His mother and brethren were insisted on, affirmed the higher worth for Him of spiritual affinity than of natural relationship (Mark iii. 34, 35). What His example teaches is that the claims of the family are not absolute, but subordinate to the claims of the Kingdom of God. The selfishness of the family is rebuked; but its necessary function in human society is recognized.

The treatment of women and children by Jesus has also a direct bearing on the problem of the family. Jesus was not at all effeminate, but thoroughly manly; and yet we can speak of His womanliness and His childlikeness. He understood the heart of the woman and the mind of the child. To give only a few instances! He surprised the disciples by talking with the woman of Samaria, as a Jewish Rabbi would have scorned to do (John iv. 27). He offended his host Simon by accepting the offering of the penitent sinner's gratitude for the grace of forgiveness (Luke vii. 39). He defended with the insight of love the overflowing of the heart of Mary of Bethany (Matt. xxvi. 10–13). He watched the children at their play (xi. 16, 17). He set a child in the midst of His disciples as an example to them (xviii. 2, 3). He welcomed the mothers and the babes, whom His disciples wanted to send away from Him (xix. 13–15). Reverence for womanhood and childhood is the sure foundation for the sanctity of the home.

An asceticism, which has no warrant either in the teaching or the example of Jesus, has sometimes betrayed the Christian Church into a depreciation of the family, with the consequent disrespect to womanhood and childhood. But wherever the teaching of

Jesus regarding the family, reinforced as it is by His treatment of women and children, has been fully accepted, there there has been a purification and elevation of the home. It can be said with absolute confidence that a society is Christian only as it maintains marriage and the family inviolate.

(11) The family has not only a *physical foundation* in the relation of the sexes and the generations to one another; but demands also an *economic basis*. The home presupposes the house. We must inevitably pass from the institution of the family to the institution of *property*. Jesus in His teaching assumed private ownership, the current custom of His age and His people; but just as little as we are entitled to infer from His references to the offering upon the altar (Matt. v. 23, 24), or to the interpretation of the law by the Scribes (xxiii. 2, 3), that He meant to perpetuate by His authority the Jewish ritual and the Jewish code, just so little right have we to assume from His allusions that private ownership is the only Christian method of holding property. As even sacrifice to God was to be subordinated to reconciliation with a brother (v. 24), so we may be confident that Jesus would approve whatever method of holding property might be most favourable to the fulfilment of the law of equal love to self and neighbour.

There is one inference regarding property that it seems legitimate to draw from Jesus' teaching about the family. In any collective ownership of the means of production in a socialist State, it would be necessary to make provision for the economic unity and independence of the family. Husband and wife, parents and children, must not be treated as individual units with their separate economic relation to the community, but such a measure of private ownership would

seem to be necessary from the Christian standpoint as to maintain the interdependence of the members of each family.

With the *distribution of wealth* Jesus would have nothing to do. When appealed to about a dispute regarding property, He not only refused to interfere, but even rebuked the covetousness which His moral insight enabled Him to detect as the motive of the request. "Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you? . . . Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke xii. 14, 15). If in the distribution of wealth covetousness is to be shunned, surely from the Christian standpoint love is to be sought. The modern economic system involves an inequality in the distribution of wealth that encourages covetousness, and disowns love, and in view of the Christian ideal of brotherhood stands condemned.

The possession of property Jesus discourages as an aim in life. The Kingdom of God, with its religious good of Divine Fatherhood and its moral duty of human brotherhood, is worth immeasurably more than all the riches of the world. Even as regards the means of meeting the simplest bodily wants for food, clothing and shelter, Jesus forbids any concern, and calls for trust in God. "Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you" (John vi. 27). "Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first His Kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things

shall be added unto you" (Matt. vi. 31–33). Character is what Jesus cares for, not property.

(12) It must be recognized, however, that character and property are not altogether unrelated. The problem of *riches and poverty* is moral as well as economic. If Jesus was indifferent to the modern pressing problem of the mode of ownership of property, He was keenly interested in the influence of riches or poverty on the soul. His judgment reverses current opinions. He regards poverty as spiritually advantageous, and wealth as spiritually dangerous.

It is probable that Luke has preserved the beatitudes in their original form, as it is less likely that he would omit the qualifications found in Matthew in order to give expression to his Ebionitism, than that Matthew would add these qualifications in order to adapt the direct personal address of Jesus to His disciples as general legislation for the Christian Church. Jesus pronounces blessed the poor, the hungry, the weeping and the persecuted, and utters His woe upon the rich, the full, the laughing, and those that are well spoken of (Luke vi. 20–26). He expressly states the reason for His judgment regarding the peril of the rich. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!" (xviii. 24). The explanation which is given in Mark, "How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the Kingdom of God!" (x. 24) may have been given by Jesus; but we cannot avoid the suspicion that it was the form of the saying which afterwards became current in order to modify the apparent harshness of the original words. Nevertheless it does bring out Jesus' meaning. For Him the danger of wealth was the self-sufficiency that it was likely to breed, indifference to the claims of God on the one hand, and to the needs of men on the other hand.

The first peril is presented to us in the parable of the *Rich Fool* (Luke xii. 16–21); and the second in the parable of the *Rich Man and Lazarus* (xvi. 19–31). How great Jesus' estimate of this peril was is surely shown by the sacrifice He required in order that it might be escaped. To the rich young ruler, whose wealth imperilled his eternal life, Jesus said, "One thing thou lackest yet; sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me" (xviii. 22). This is not a universal demand; but it is applicable wherever and whenever property endangers character. "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (verse 27). There are rich men who so humbly depend on and so sincerely serve God that their wealth is not a danger to their own souls, but a trust from God that they hold as a means of doing good to others. Wealth can be robbed of its poisonous sting only as it is used in relieving the needs of others. That, as has already been indicated, is taught positively as precept in the parable of *the Unrighteous Steward* (xvi. 1–9), and negatively as warning in the parable *of the Rich Man and Lazarus* (19–31).

It is noteworthy that in the second parable we have the only instance of the use of a proper name. Surely some part of the lesson taught is hid in the proper name *Lazarus;* if not, why did Jesus here only depart from His usual method? Lazarus is the Greek abbreviation of the Hebrew *Eleazar*, which means, "God hath helped." The poor man is represented in the story, in contrast with the rich man, as one whom God cared for because he trusted in God. The advantage of poverty is that it exercises man's trust in God as wealth does not, and that it has an experience of the care of God as wealth has not. His wealth keeps the

rich man from God; his need drives the poor man to God.

It must be added, however, that when Jesus speaks of poverty, He is not thinking of such a ruthless struggle for daily bread, such unrelieved misery, such moral degradation and religious despair as the conditions of our modern society impose on its outcasts. There is a squalor and shame, a sorrow and suffering in the poverty of our complex civilization which a simpler society did not know.

Jesus assumes that the needs of the poor will be met. He condemns ostentatious, but commends secret almsgiving (Matt. vi. 1–4). This is what He requires of the young ruler (xix. 21). The neglect of this duty is what damns the Rich Man (Luke xvi. 25). Jesus Himself during His ministry had compassion, and not only healed the sick, but even fed the hungry. The society Jesus approves is not a society which in its distribution of wealth intercepts the Father's bounty to the most needy of His children, but one that through the help of human love responds to the trust in divine love. If under present conditions private charity should prove inadequate to relieve all necessities, then Jesus' teaching and example in regard to the poor impose the obligation of a collective provision for such human wants.

(13) Wealth is spiritually perilous, and poverty spiritually advantageous; yet the way in which the rich class can escape its disadvantage is by giving freely to relieve the necessity of the needy class. Is Jesus then, we seem to be forced to ask, indifferent or even hostile to *industry*? He Himself left His carpenter's bench in Nazareth; He called His disciples from their fishing in the Sea of Galilee; when He sent them out on their mission to "the lost sheep of the

house of Israel" He forbade their making provision for their bodily needs, and made them depend on the bounty of those to whom they were sent. Accordingly voluntary poverty and mendicancy have been advocated as the distinctively evangelical virtues. We are not left to the *reductio ad absurdum* argument that if there were no workers, but all became beggars, society would come to an end. The vocation of Jesus and His disciples was unique; the preacher of the Gospel rendered a service to the hearer which gave him a claim for support, "The labourer is worthy of his food" (Matt. x. 10); the disciples as the destined leaders of the Christian community needed the elementary discipline for their high and holy calling of an absolute submission to and dependence on God even in regard to their bodily needs.

Jesus in His teaching shows an interest in the manifold callings of men, the husbandman, the shepherd, the fisherman, the merchantman; even the duties and cares of the housewife receive His notice. There is no evidence whatever that He disapproved of industry, and commended mendicancy.

If not in Palestine generally, yet throughout the Roman Empire, *slavery* was common, and most labour was servile. Jesus does not appear to have had any occasion to pronounce any judgment on the question; but from His general principles we may infer that He would have acted in regard to it as did the Christian Church afterwards. Instead of advocating the abolition of the institution, He would have so applied to the relation of master and slave the law of love as to transform its character. In several parables Jesus refers to the relation of master and servant. The exacting demands of the Kingdom are illustrated by the master, who enjoins the servant on his return from

the field to wait on him while he sups without thanking him for the service (Luke xvii. 7–10). But Jesus here pronounces no moral judgment on the master's conduct; and it would be an unwarranted inference that Jesus approved harsh treatment of servants. Such an impression finds its correction in the three parables of the *Hours*, the *Talents*, and the *Pounds*, of which, according to Dr. Bruce, the "common theme is the political economy of the Kingdom" (*The Parabolic Teaching of Christ*, p. 178). "The Parable of the Pounds," he says, "illustrates the proposition that when ability is equal quantity determines relative merit" (p. 179). "The Parable of the Talents illustrates the proposition that when ability varies, then not the absolute quantity of work done, but the ratio of the quantity to the ability, ought to determine value." "The Parable of the Labourers in the vineyard or of the Hours teaches that a small quantity of work done in a right spirit is of greater value than a great quantity done in a wrong spirit" (p. 180). These are the principles by which the relation of work and wages is to be determined in the Kingdom of God; and, although Jesus is thinking of anything but the organization of industry, yet surely in a just economic system ability must be recognized, industry rewarded, and fidelity commended.

Jesus refers not only to reward, but also to punishment in the relation of master and servant. Unfaithful servants will be beaten with few or many stripes according to their demerit (Luke xii. 48). Wrongdoing cannot go unpunished in a Christian society. Yet forgiveness must always be ready for penitence, but that penitence alone is recognized as genuine which includes the willingness to forgive. The Parable of the *Unforgiving Servant* (Matt. xviii. 23–35) teaches

this truth. In the relation of master and servant, as Jesus presents it in the parables, faithfulness in the servant is insisted on, but righteous and even gracious principles of action are assumed on the part of the master. We should be putting these parables to a use Jesus never intended, if we attempted to derive from them directly regulations for the relations of Capital and Labour to-day. It is with moral dispositions and not with economic conditions that Jesus is solely concerned. Nevertheless, we may confidently affirm that no relations of Capital and Labour are Christian in which these moral considerations are ignored, in which the supreme law of equal love to self and neighbour is disobeyed.

(14) The industry, which Jesus takes for granted without censure, and even with commendation of such virtues as it brings into exercise, is industry directed towards meeting the needs of a comparatively simple life. Modern industry is producing not only the necessities, but even *the comforts, refinements and luxuries of life.* We may well ask ourselves whether Jesus, living the simplest life, absorbed in the Kingdom of God, indifferent to earthly goods, could approve our complex civilization. It may be said unhesitatingly that the luxury which ministers to the vanity or the indulgence of the rich stands absolutely condemned. This is not the place in which to show that this luxury is as economically wasteful as it is morally hurtful and socially wrongful. There are material advances in modern society that are a hindrance to the progress of the Kingdom of God. When the earth is searched far and near, and bird and beast are mercilessly slaughtered, to tickle the palate and to adorn the person of those whom a superfluity of wealth has robbed of the taste for simple pleasures, there is decadence and not

improvement. When it is recognized that this superabundance of riches in the few is accompanied by, nay, in some measure is the cause of the insufficiency for the needs of life of the many, then it must be admitted that the Christian social ideal is absolutely contradicted. That life might be made much more simple without any loss of any good, aesthetic or intellectual, worth preserving, must surely be freely admitted; such simpler life would certainly be more Christian.

On the other hand, the teaching and example of Jesus do not seem to demand that that simplicity should be carried as far as asceticism. Jesus did require self-denial, the sacrifice of the offending eye, hand, foot (Matt. v. 29, 30; xviii. 8, 9), the taking up of the Cross, (xvi. 24), the abandonment of home and kindred (viii. 18–22), the loss of life itself (xvi. 25); yet the demand is always made in the interests of the Kingdom of God. Pain or loss or death is not an end in itself; self-torture is no duty. The Kingdom offer a fuller and a larger good than any which for its sake must be surrendered. Jesus Himself lived in utmost simplicity and even utter poverty; yet He was no ascetic. In this respect in the popular opinion He compared unfavourably with John the Baptist. "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners" (xi. 19).

It is hardly necessary to add that the advocacy of total abstinence as the most effective method of dealing with the evil of strong drink to-day is not based on asceticism, but on the Christian principle of avoiding at any cost every moral offence, every cause of stumbling to self or another. If Jesus' example cannot in this respect be appealed to, it is because the conditions of His age did not require this form of self-denial.

The motive from which total abstinence is practised by many to-day is in complete harmony with His spirit and purpose. Can it be doubted that if self-denial for the sake of the Kingdom were in manifold forms more common, our society would be very much more Christian in character than it is to-day?

That Jesus was not altogether indifferent to what may be called the *aesthetic* aspect of life may be inferred from His interest in nature around Him, the birds of the air, and the flowers of the field (Matt. vi. 26, 28). To promote art, science, literature, or philosophy did not fall within the scope of His unique vocation—the revelation of God as Father, and the redemption of man from sin—on the fulfilment of which during His brief earthly ministry He had to concentrate all His desire and effort: "working while it was yet day." His perfection was not extensive, quantitative, but intensive, qualitative. His speciality was not everything, but "the one thing needful," the union of God and man, without which nothing has enduring meaning, unchanging worth. In the Divine Fatherhood and the human brotherhood there is nothing adverse to any of these interests and pursuits, even although Jesus in His absorption in, and devotion to, this one aim had no thought to spare, and no help to give to any of them. Genuinely Christian character has been developed in seeking the True, loving the Beautiful, as well as striving for the Good; and accordingly none of these aims or endeavours needs to be shut out from a fully Christian society. All these interests and pursuits, however, to be fully Christian in spirit and purpose, must ever be controlled by the law of love. The defence Jesus offered of the gift of the sinful woman (Luke vii. 44–47) and of Mary of Bethany (Matt. xxvi. 10–13)

suggests that the society Jesus would approve need not rest on any narrow utilitarian basis.

(15) The teaching of Jesus has recently been so interpreted as to deprive of His moral sanction the very existence of *an organized society* with laws which may be enforced. His prohibition of personal revenge, and His instructions to His disciples when persecuted to submit readily and fully to any wrongs inflicted on them, have been generalized into a final theory of government. The three concrete instances Jesus gives of such submission, the turning of the other cheek to him who has smitten the one, the surrender of the cloak to him who by law has taken away the coat, the going of two miles when forced to go one (Matt. v. 39–41) have been treated as rules of permanent and universal application. Under no conditions, it is argued, is force to be met with force ; wrong must never be withstood ; obedience to law cannot be compelled.

In disproof of this conclusion it may be pointed out *first of all* that Jesus is here not laying down rules of conduct, but is giving illustrations of a principle, and illustrations of what one may call the *maximum requirement* of the principle. If your love for your enemies, if your forgiveness of the insults and injuries they inflict upon you, demand such submission to wrong, you must submit—this is His meaning. Jesus does not seek by hard and fast rule to supersede conscience ; conscience must judge in each case whether the principle demands this or another application. *Secondly*, it is to be noted that one of the illustrations is drawn from temporary and local conditions—the service enforced by the Roman soldiery—as in the case of Simon of Cyrene who was compelled to carry the cross of Jesus (Mark xv. 21)—and cannot be a rule for all ages. *Thirdly*, the command is addressed to His dis-

ciples for their guidance under persecution. Jesus has not at all in view the problem of the government of society. He is not here pronouncing any opinion as to the functions of the State, or the means by which its authority may be enforced.

One may say confidently that government with the assent of the governed is nearer the Christian social ideal than the rule of force. That does not, however, involve that wrong-doers shall not be restrained, if need be, by force. So far as the moral interests of a society demand the suppression of vice and crime, there is nothing in the teaching of Jesus, reasonably and conscientiously interpreted, to forbid such repression. If the punishments inflicted are vindictive, then the Christian principle is most certainly violated. If the punishments even are only preventive, they fall short of the requirements of the supreme law of love. Only if they are reformatory in intention, even though they may not always be in result, are they consistent with the Christian social ideal. Undoubtedly there is a stupidity and even a cruelty in many of the prison regulations, which sets them in absolute antagonism to the spirit of Jesus.

If Jesus' principle of non-retaliation is to receive its proper modern applications, it is not only in individual conduct, but also in social regulations. When Christian men are not only subjects, but citizens, then not submission to government only, but participation in government in order that as far as is possible the Christian ideal may be advanced and not retarded in its realization, is their duty. His ideal is a society in which love is so supreme, that law with its penalties is no longer necessary. Till love gains such supremacy law may be enforced, so long as it keeps not back, but hastens on the reign of love. So also in international relations

the Christian principle appears to demand that war, and the suspicions, rivalries, ambitions which lead to war, shall be avoided at any cost of wealth, or power, or fame. To the writer it seems that the possibility must be allowed of a national resistance to aggression or tyranny which would not come under the condemnation of Jesus. Just as within a nation crime may be restrained, so as between nation and nation an attack on a people's liberty may be resisted. Yet from the Christian standpoint the ideal is a humanity that has forgotten the arts of war. Whatever in international relations removes the provocation to war is an application of the principle which Jesus enunciated. A literal obedience in all cases to the instances given as rigid rules would involve the supremacy of wrong in the world, the suppression of right, not only a temporary delay in the realization, but even the final extinction of the Christian ideal of just and kind and helpful government.

(16) Having thus briefly surveyed the teaching of Jesus on those questions which are of urgent interest to us to-day, we are led to two considerations which seem to be of utmost importance if that teaching is to afford us the guidance which we need now. Social reformers in their ardour have sometimes felt that the teaching of Jesus did not yield them at once the solutions of the problems which they sought. This feeling is due to mistaken expectations, to putting the wrong questions to Jesus. The proof of the universality and permanence of the Christian religion lies just in this, that it does not deal directly with the needs of one age or of one people, that it does not perpetuate and diffuse temporary and local customs and standards. If Jesus had personally concerned Himself with the social problems of His own time and surroundings, He could

not have become the world's Saviour and Lord. If our social problems had been anticipated by Him, and He had dealt with them, His teaching would have been out of all relation to the life around Him. The temporal and particular could have a place in His teaching only by way of illustration of the permanent and the universal. To grasp the illustration and cling to it would in most cases be to let slip and lose the principle. Just because Jesus so simplified and unified religion and morality as filial love to God and fraternal love to man, is the Christian faith so adaptable to different races and changing periods. Just because He applied that supreme principle only to a few fundamental relations of human society, can there be progress in Christian society.

The wisdom and the worth of the method of Jesus are made more evident, if we compare it with that of Mohammed or Buddha. Buddha, that he might share his way of salvation with others, founded an order of monks, and only unwillingly associated with it in an inferior position an order of nuns. Alike his problem and its solution were temporary and local. Without altogether losing its distinctive features Buddhism cannot be the religion or morality of a progressive, civilized, modern society. Mohammed was not content with giving a creed ; he must needs attach to it a code which minutely regulated the morals, manners, duties and relations of his followers. Although he was a reformer, he was not so detached from his environment as to be uninfluenced by its beliefs, customs, institutions. While purposing to make Islam the universal religion, he nevertheless forced it into the moulds of Arab society, and so made it incapable without fundamental change of adaptation to new conditions. That Jesus did not legislate for His community as Buddha

and Mohammed both did is a proof that His Kingdom was not of this world, the natural product of one age or one people, but came in Him from an eternal and infinite source, above the divisions of race and the mutations of time, and so adapted, when it entered into human history, for universality and permanence. Because we cannot find ready-made answers to all the questions of our time in the teaching of Jesus, it is fittest to yield to those who know how to cast the plummet of their conscience, quickened by His Spirit, into the depths of His principles the guidance that any age or any people may need.

(17) It may be objected, however, that Jesus, although He laid down such permanent and universal principles, did not foresee any so gradual progress of the Kingdom of God in the world. There is a tendency among some scholars to force the teachings of Jesus into the Procrustean bed of contemporary Jewish thought: and to deny to them any originality of truth. It is impossible here to enter on a discussion of the difficult subject of Jesus' eschatological teaching, in which He foretells in the near future God's judgment on Jerusalem, and in close connexion with it anticipates His own Second Advent, and the consummation of the age. There is no indication of any long interval of time between the events. It must be observed, however, that He expects the fall of Jerusalem in the same generation (Matt. xxiv. 34), but of His Return even He the Son knows not the hour (verse 36. It seems reasonable so to understand these conflicting indications of time, as there appears to be considerable confusion in the evangelists' reports of these utterances of Jesus). The parables collected in Matthew xiii. bearing on the mystery of the Kingdom suggest at least that Jesus had in view a longer and slower development of the King-

dom by moral and religious means, and not by supernatural power. It is very difficult to believe that Jesus as the founder of the Kingdom of God on earth had not at least as clear a foresight of its historical progress as He had a keen insight into its moral and religious principles. A closer consideration should surely convince us that the Kingdom which is not of the world, which spreads as a mustard seed, and works changes like the leaven, which is so valued as a treasure or a pearl of great price as to be secured at the greatest sacrifice, into which the tares may be introduced as well as the wheat, and the success of which depends on the receptivity of human souls for divine truth and grace, that such a Kingdom comes not with outward observation, or in sudden manifestation. That Jesus' foresight included any detailed knowledge of the history of His cause in the world need not, and cannot be maintained ; but it is surely giving Him less than is due to His wisdom and grace to suppose that He did not anticipate, as the joy set before Him, for which He endured the Cross, the world-wide spread, and age-long growth of His Kingdom unto an end as great as, and worthy of, His sacrifice. As other essays in this volume will show, the Kingdom of God has been coming in a gradual progress in human history ; and if the results are any indication of the intention of Jesus, we are warranted in concluding that, however *revolutionary* His moral and religious principles might be, the method of Jesus in applying these principles in human society is *evolutionary*, not in opposition, to, but in agreement with, the method of God in Creation and Providence. If progress is to be Christian in character, it must not be secured by physical violence, or even political expediency, but by the enlightening of the mind, the quickening of the conscience, and the renewal of the life.

From this conclusion there follows an important inference in regard to the function of the Christian Church in Social Reform. It is not enough that its end should be Christian, the means too must be. It is not the task of the Church to hasten or delay changes in the economic conditions by stimulating the suspicion and hostility of the masses against the classes, or the reverse, by taking sides either for Capital or Labour, by defending private property or advocating collective ownership, by identifying itself with or opposing itself to any political party. It is its task, however, to insist that not bare legal justice, or even mere economic equality, but genuine Christian love shall inspire all social relationships; that the aim of all social progress shall be a wider and yet closer brotherhood of mutual sympathy and service; that the pity of Christ Himself shall be felt by all who are the members of His body for the miseries and sins of even the lowest of His brethren; that the fellowship of His sufferings and conformity to His death means to-day very specially individual sacrifice for the common good; that the power of His Resurrection will be realized above all in this age not so much in personal experience only, as in former ages, but in national and international history; that the wrongs and cruelties that men inflict on one another must be brought to the judgment-bar of the Holy Love that gave itself in desolation and darkness to save sinful mankind. This may appear a less attractive method, but if the experience of the past offers guidance for the present, it will prove the more effective.

(18) In conclusion it seems necessary to add that the work of the Church is limited by its strength, that its abounding fruit depends on the fullness of life that it can draw from its roots in the truth and grace of God in Jesus Christ. Not only the teaching and exam-

ple of Jesus must be taken into account in dealing with the Social Problem of to-day. The Christian Ideal is not only revealed, but also realized in Christ. It is not there merely for our contemplation and imitation. It is there for our appropriation by faith in His grace. Loftier and larger principles were never uttered; a greater service was never rendered to mankind; and never was a greater sacrifice endured for the good of men. Yet these principles can never be fully applied, nor can that service or that sacrifice be closely imitated, until Christ Himself in His present and potent Spirit becomes the inmost life of the soul, until His truth illumines the conscience, His grace energizes the will, and His love captivates the affections. Nothing could be more foolish than the tendency which is only too common to-day to oppose the devout life and the practical duty. The lower springs of admiration for and acceptance of the teaching and example of Jesus will not keep full the river of Christ-like ministry to the needs of men; it must draw its streams from the higher springs of a life lived with Christ in God, a life crucified and risen with Christ. Meditation on, and communion with the Living Lord is the source of the wise and holy love for men that is needed in all social relations.

Should the much serving of even philanthropy divert the desire and interest of the Christian Church from the one thing needful, the love of the Father through the grace of the Son in the fellowship of the Spirit, ere long the work for man itself would lose its inspiration, would sink into a soulless routine, would fail in bringing to men their highest good. It was for the world's lasting gain that Jesus made it "His meat and His drink," to do the Father's will in caring for the souls of men even unto the sacrifice of His Cross, even though His eyes had to be withdrawn from, and

His heart had to be closed to many of the other interests of life. His concentration on the revelation of God's Fatherhood, and the realization through redemption of man's sonship, was the necessary condition of the ever-widening expansion of man's brotherhood. The religious good of the Kingdom of God must be secured for man before its moral duty could be imposed on man. Accordingly, the Christian ideal of social relations has its core in the Christian faith in God as the Father who in grace forgives the son who in faith comes to Him. The grateful love to God which is the fruit of the divine grace is the root of the human sympathy, service and sacrifice on behalf of others which brings the Kingdom of God on earth in a holy brotherhood of mankind which reflects the Holy Fatherhood of God.

III

The Preparation for the Christian Ideal in the Gentile Environment of the Primitive Church

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ARGUMENT.

I. The Seed of the Gospel and the Soil of the Graeco-Roman World—The Traditional Account of its Condition One-Sided and Based on Insufficient Evidence.

II. The General Law of Development—The two Stages: (1) The Basis of Society among the Greeks and its Demolition—The Guidance of Philosophy—Epicureanism and Stoicism—(2) Rome as a Military State—The Patria Potestas—Hardness and Strength.

III. The Actual Picture—A Society in Process of Decomposition but giving Promise already of a New Order of Things.

(1) Parallels to Modern Society in the Early Roman Empire—A High Level of Prosperity in Material Civilization, a Sense of Economic Responsibility in the Government, Corruption in the Upper Classes, Abounding Generosity.

(2) Peculiar Points in the Imperial Age—The Position of Women, The Public Games, The Institution of Slavery, and the Influence of Philosophy—The Defect of the Philosophy—The Absence of a Vivifying Spirit.

III

The Preparation for the Christian Ideal in the Gentile Environment of the Primitive Church.

Πῶς οὖν οἷόν τε ἦν τὴν εἰρηνικὴν ταύτην διδασκαλίαν κρατῆσαι, εἰ μὴ τὸ τῆς οἰκουμένης τῇ Ἰησοῦ ἐπιδημίᾳ μετεβέβλητο πανταχοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ἡμερώτερον; *Origen.*

Ἐπαιδαγώγει γὰρ καὶ ἡ φιλοσοφία τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ὡς ὁ νόμος τοὺς Ἑβραίους εἰς Χριστόν. προπαρασκευάζει τοίνυν αὕτη προ ὁδοποιοῦσα τὸν ὑπὸ Χριστοῦ τελειούμενον.

Clement of Alexandria.

FREED from the narrow bonds of Judaism, the Christian Gospel invaded the Graeco-Roman world. What was the kind of civilization which it found there established? What ideas and institutions had it to combat? On the other hand, to what extent and through what processes had the hearts and minds of men been prepared for its reception? What, in a word, was the nature of the soil into which the good seed must fall, and what was already sown or growing there? These are the questions which we have now to consider.

It has been usual until quite recent times to regard the Roman Empire, during the first century of our era, as a world of profoundest moral darkness, relieved

only where a few faint beams of light, reflected from the East, gave promise of the coming dawn. A true picture of society was found in the familiar lines of Matthew Arnold :—

> "On that hard pagan world disgust
> And secret loathing fell;
> Deep weariness and sated lust
> Made human life a hell."

Contemporary writers were quoted to the same effect. Had not Tacitus written of his own age as "a reign of terror, in which no virtue could live," and called the Imperial City "a common sink where all the abominations of the world met and multiplied?" [1]. Seneca was the tutor of Nero, and knew the secrets of the court: could anything exceed the bitterness of his description?—

> "All things are full of iniquity and vice. More crimes are committed than can be remedied by force. A monstrous contest of wickedness is carried on. Daily the lust of sin increases: daily the sense of shame grows less. Casting away all regard for what is good and honourable, pleasure runs riot without restraint. Vice no longer hides itself, it walks abroad before all eyes. . . . Innocence has ceased to exist . . ." [2]

From these and similar passages we have learnt to picture a world of absolute power unregulated by conscience, of enormous wealth free from any sense of responsibility; where wickedness sat enthroned, while more than half the population lived in slavery, chattels of masters trained to seek amusement in scenes of blood and human agony; where the widow and orphan were unregarded, and the very name of

[1] Tacitus, *Agricola* 1, *Annals*, xv. 44; see also the whole chapter in the *Histories*, i, 2.

[2] Seneca, *De Ira*, ii. 8.

charity was unknown; a world where sense and intellect were abundantly gratified, while the soul starved, because love had no place in it. How a society so essentially corrupt could have held together for so long was not explained: in this barren and exhausted soil, it was believed, Christianity, like a root out of dry ground, miraculously grew.

To deny that the traditional account contained much truth would be absurd, but it was one-sided and based on insufficient evidence. The best known classical writers are either historians, who amid the excitements of the court and capital give only occasional attention to the provinces, or satirists whose very art presupposes a certain amount of exaggeration and caricature. Peace and the prosperity of humble folk have always found few annalists. Moreover it is difficult to trace the influences at work upon those who did not read. This is unfortunate, because, as we must never forget, Christianity first found welcome among the "lower" classes, and worked its way upwards. Yet probably these classes are less susceptible to change than the rest of the community. The picture of the masses in Petronius and the *Golden Ass* reveal very much the same characteristics that still mark the peoples of the South—a gay, sensual crowd, materialistic in its hopes and fears and at the same time very superstitious. The researches of recent years among inscriptions, papyri and humbler potsherds are bringing to light an immense amount of evidence which may some day be combined into a vivid presentation of their every-day lives,[1] but already we have enough to justify the statement of

[1] See Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten, Osten* [2], 1909, p. 212; also his remarks in the *Expositor*, for Feb. 1909, p. 100; Renan, *Les Apôtres* p. 312.

Renan that the world in general had never been so happy as during the first two centuries of the Roman Empire. Parts of it indeed, as for instance Asia Minor, "the province of five hundred towns," have never reached so high a level since. Of the many modern authorities which might be quoted, let us cite one paragraph from the most recent English work on the subject: it will serve at once to correct the traditional view of our period and to mark out the lines which our investigation must follow. In the introductory chapter of his *Roman Society from Nero to Aurelius*, Dr. Dill writes:—

"The inscriptions, the letters of the younger Pliny, even the pages of Tacitus himself, reveal to us another world from that of the Satirist. On countless tombs we have the record or the ideal of a family life of sober, honest industry, and pure affection. . . . The provinces, even under a Tiberius, a Nero, a Domitian, enjoyed a freedom from oppression which they seldom enjoyed under the Republic. Just and upright Governors were the rule and not the exception, and even an Otho or a Vitellius, tainted with every private vice, returned from their provincial governments with a reputation for integrity. Municipal freedom and self-government were probably at their height at the very time when life and liberty in the capital were in hourly peril. The great Stoic doctrine of the brotherhood and equality of men, as members of a world-wide commonwealth, which was destined to inspire legislation in the Antonine age, was openly preached in the reigns of Caligula and Nero. A softer tone—a modern note of pity for the miserable, and succour for the helpless—makes itself heard in the literature of the first century. The moral and mental equality of the sexes was being more and more recognized in theory, as the capacity of women for heroic action and self-sacrifice was displayed so often in the age of the tyranny and of the Stoic martyrs. The old cruelty and contempt for the slave will not give way for many a generation; but the slave is now treated by all the great leaders of moral reform as a being of the same mould as his master, his equal, if not his superior, in capacity for virtue."[1]

[1] Dill, *op. cit.*, pp. 2 f. See also Mommsen, *Provinces of the*

These facts, evidence of a new influence at work, require fuller treatment and illustration. But a preliminary question arises. What was the source of this new influence? Not Christianity, for it shows itself in authors to whom the infant sect was unknown. Indeed, as has been said, "had the new life flowing forth from Christ encountered the still unbroken ancient life, it would have recoiled from the encounter ineffectually." [1] We cannot imagine St. Paul obtaining a hearing at Athens in the time of Pericles, or at Rome during the second Punic War. His message would have fallen upon preoccupied ears and never reached the hearts of men who felt no need of his gospel. "But when the fullness of the time was come"—the phrase is historically accurate! Ancient civilization had reached a crisis in this first century of the Roman Empire. Society was in a state of transition:—

> "Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
> The other powerless to be born."

If then we are to understand what a French writer has called "this preparation of souls," [2] it will be necessary to inquire into the manner and process of the change, even at the cost of an apparent digression.

Let us begin with what may be called the general law of development in the histories of all dominant nations. In modern Europe it appears as clearly as in ancient Rome. There are two stages to be dis-

Roman Empire, p. 4; Bussell, *The School of Plato*, introduction, and infra, p. [37].

[1] Uhlhorn, *Die christliche Liebesthätigkeit in der alten Kirche* (E. T., 1883, p. 40).

[2] Martha, *Les Moralistes sous l'Empire romain*, p. 4.

tinguished. The first is the age when the tribal or civic spirit is supreme, when the individual is sacrificed to the State, and intellectual interests are subordinated to the political. During this period the power is probably in the hands of the few, and the condition of the masses is one of poverty and neglect; but the nation itself is strong in war and rapidly expands its dominion. Then as conquest brings wealth, and wealth luxury, a second period begins. The body of the nation, as it were, is at rest and the mind is allowed to awake. The softer, feminine side of human nature begins to find expression; the claims of pleasure, art and all forms of individual culture press forward to be recognized. In the reaction against the supremacy of the State, public duties are found to be irksome, and institutions such as marriage or an established religion become unfashionable. Men object to any responsibilities that threaten to limit their personal independence, and demand freedom to make their own fortune or to save their own souls. Economically, the centre of gravity is changing, money becomes a force as well as birth and the sword. A middle class arises and slowly acquires political power. As a military force the nation has begun to decline. Morally and intellectually it is hanging in the balance, and contemporary observers will express most diverse opinions as to its condition. In the fierce conflict between old traditions and new ideals, symptoms emerge which one party will hail as signs of "progress," the other as marks of "corruption."

The Graeco-Roman world then was in the midst of its second period when Christianity entered it. To recognize this fact will help us to understand the confusions and contradictions which we shall find as we proceed to study its details. But we have first to

examine rather more particularly the causes which brought the first period of its history to an end.

The basis of ancient society, among both Greeks and Romans, had been the City-State. The "City" was an end in itself, the supreme object of devotion to its members, whose obedience it claimed in every relation of life under the triple manifestation of Law, Citizenship and Religion. The citizens were bound to one another by mutual ties and obligations; all non-citizens, whether slaves or foreigners, were, originally at least, without any rights whatsoever; the claims of common humanity were neither recognized nor understood.

It was this narrow conception of the State which wrecked the efforts of the Athenians to found a lasting empire in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., and limited the speculations of even the greatest philosophers.

The first blow at the ancient fabric was struck, perhaps, by Socrates, who declared himself a citizen, not of Athens, but of the World[1]: the demolition was completed by the conquests of Alexander, whose greatness appears more in his political enlightenment than in his military successes. To Aristotle the distinction between Greek and barbarian appeared natural and ultimate, and when Alexander was master of the East, his old tutor is said to have advised him to treat the first as a leader treats his friends, but to use the foreigners as instruments of his despotic pleasure. "But he," continues Plutarch, "as one come down from heaven to reconcile the feuds of mankind, bade all consider the world their country and the virtuous their friends."[2]

[1] Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, v. 108.

[2] Plutarch, *De Alexandri Fortuna*, v.

The political and social effects of Alexander's conquests were immense—nothing less than the end of the classical age of Hellas. Politically, innumerable petty republics were merged into one vast unity. Sovereign states sank to provincial towns: councils accustomed to debate on themes imperial, found themselves limited to questions of municipal organization.

Moreover, the old philosophy disappeared with the conditions which had given it birth. It is one of the most ironical proofs of man's short-sightedness that Aristotle's *Ethics* was out of date almost as soon as it was published. Theories of citizenship lost their interest when the "City" was no more. Still it is true of nations as of individuals that by dying we live, and with the end of Hellas Hellenism began. Though Athens had lost her Empire, and even her independence, she now for the first time realized the proud title which Pericles had given her, and became the university of the world, and by the conquests of Alexander, absorbed and extended in the Empire of Rome, Greek ideals and Greek civilization spread from the five rivers of Indus to the Atlantic Ocean. Again, when their collective majesty was taken from them, men found their individuality. Though systems perished and Empires changed hands, private lives still went on, and personal sorrows had to be borne; indeed now that public duties had been so diminished, they filled the larger part of the horizon. The change is clearly shown in the comic stage, where the varying fortunes of individuals now engrossed the attention formerly given to affairs of state, and here was the origin of Terence's famous line:—

"Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto."

Thus two important results emerge: first, a cosmo-

politanism, in which the old distinction between Greek and barbarian disappears, and second, the new spirit of individualism.

For serious guidance in their perplexities men turned to philosophy, which adapted itself to the new order. The difference may be shown by two definitions. To Plato and Aristotle the origin of philosophy was a sense of intellectual doubt and bewilderment. To Epictetus it is :—" A consciousness of one's own weakness and insufficiency for what is required." [1] Metaphysics, that is to say, sinks to the background; ethics becomes of supreme importance. Philosophy is no longer the pillar of fire going before a few intrepid seekers after truth : it is rather an ambulance following in the wake of the struggle for existence and picking up the weak and wounded. Plato's contemptuous exclamation :—" For the people philosophy is impossible ! " [2] is not repeated ; on the contrary, philosophy, as Cicero puts it, " is the art of life " ; and the post-Aristotelian schools, like modern churches, made no distinction of sex, or status, or nationality. They offered to all, by divers ways, a road to peace and happiness and a stronghold against the attacks of external fortune.

Two systems of thought, separated by a fundamental difference of standpoint, and appealing to opposite sides of human nature, were pre-eminently successful in their attempts to supply this need. It did not occur to either Epicurus or Zeno to " call in a new world to redress the balance of the old." They brought no hopes of heaven, no fuller revelation of God, but sought rather to make each man a god unto himself, and this present life independent of circum-

[1] Epictetus, *Dissertations*, II. xi.
[2] Plato, *Republic*, 494*a*.

stances. Into the details of their teaching we need not now enter; they concern us only in so far as they helped to modify or reform the social ideas of our period, and we may be content with the most general summary.

Epicurus was a man to whom tradition has done scant justice. We have been taught to call him a godless scientist and pleasure-seeker, and neither title is strictly applicable. A kindly soul, with a genius for friendship, he was the author of a real evangel to many who were in bondage to the fear of death or to the mental disquietude which is the result of polytheism. His ideal was *a quiet life*, and his Articles show that he was prepared to sacrifice any "system" to secure it. By what he believed to be a true, or at least a plausible, account of man's nature and environment, he hoped to banish panic from their minds, and pain from their members. Happiness, he taught, consisted not in the multitude of possessions but in the fewness of desires: in the service of philosophy was true freedom. He was, perhaps, the first to discover that society is made for man, and not man for society. In the garden where his followers met, women and even slaves were made welcome, and little children were among the recipients of his letters. "In his lifetime," writes a biographer, "his friends were numbered by whole cities," [1] and generations after his death disciples were found eager, like Lucretius, to praise the saviour who had brought life and—mortality to light! The school hardly appears above the surface of history. Averse by tradition from activity in either politics or research, and inspired rather by the example of its master than by his promulgation of "the truth," it survived its great rival as well as all early forms

[1] See Diogenes Laertius, x. 9.

of Greek philosophy, and lasted into the fourth century of the Christian era. The grosser minds of Rome seized upon those parts of Epicurus' teaching which were most liable to perversion, and won for it the infamy now associated with the name of epicure.[1] But while it must be admitted that Epicureanism was always fatally open to abuse, it did much in a hard and unsettled age to develop the more amiable virtues of domestic life.

Very different was the object and influence of Stoicism. Its founder, Zeno, was like many of its early leaders, a Phoenician, and in him appear some of those characteristics—an intolerance of imperfection almost amounting to a sense of sin, a demand for resignation before the All-Supreme, and an uncompromising idealism—which we associate with the Semitic spirit, but which were new in the thought of Hellas. To him seems to have been due the introduction of the ideas and words of duty and *conscience*, as well as the distinction of *moral* values, which are absolute, from practical values, which are relative and strictly *indifferent*. He first clearly stated that the will or intention is everything, and that circumstances are nothing, except as forming material for exercising the will or building character. The Empire of Alexander seems to have produced upon his mind an effect very like that which centuries later the Roman Empire produced upon the mind of St. Augustine. He, too, had his vision of a City of God, in which were neither Greek nor barbarian, male nor female, slave nor free, but all, as recognizing one law of Reason, members of one

[1] Its most typical representative under the Empire is perhaps Horace, and it would be interesting to consider what has been the moral effect of his *Odes* upon successive generations of English gentlemen.

State and therefore one of another. For the Reason, which is in and rules the world, is one with the reason in our breasts which does or should govern our lives. Therefore the Law of the universe is also the law of our own nature, and we can only realize ourselves and obtain our freedom in conforming to the purposes of God.

To some members of the school this thought came with all the force of a religion; and so Cleanthes, like Newman, has his hymn :—

"Lead me, O Zeus, and thou, O Destiny,
Lead Thou me on:
To whatsoever task thou sendest me
Lead Thou me on:
I follow fearless, or if in mistrust
I lag and will not, follow still I must." [1]

Thus the Stoics literally made a virtue of necessity. Still, it was this mystic assurance that formed the strength of the school.

"The enormous influence which it exerted over the minds of the ancient world, its power to strengthen the souls of the noblest men for action and endurance, lay in its firm grasp of this central idea—that there is a rational principle in the world which is one in nature and with the self-conscious intelligence within us, and that through apparent disorder this principle is inevitably realizing itself." [2]

Praise such as this is to be found in all accounts of Stoicism; and yet we must haste to add qualifications. If it had peculiar strength, it had also peculiar weaknesses. No other school failed so completely to connect its ideals with practical life. A curious unreality, a fatal lack of grip, runs through the whole

[1] Quoted by Epictetus, *Manual*, 52.

[2] Caird, *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, vol. ii. p. 84.

system. Enunciating the loftiest ideas as to the sovereignty of "God" and the universal brotherhood of man, it fails, nevertheless, to release them from the region of intellectual concepts. Again, the slight importance which Stoicism attached to external circumstances, while forming much of its power as a creed for the individual, greatly weakened its force to stimulate practical reform, or inspire active benevolence. The characteristic attitude of the Stoic to life is fairly portrayed in Henley's *Invictus*, but his "*unconquerable* soul" could be gained only at the cost of much sacrifice. All emotions that might disturb the central calm, all adjuncts which were within the reach of envious fortune—life, honour, the fate of others—these must be regarded as indifferent by the true sage. "He is incapable of passion," we read, "neither does he forgive any man."[1] To render himself invulnerable, the Stoic turned his heart into a stone:—"He made a solitude and called it peace." This profound egotism, so inconsistent with the better instincts of humanity, will meet us again when we consider the great Stoics of Rome. It remains first to inquire how Roman society underwent the change which had revolutionized the Hellenistic world.

From its earliest history Rome was essentially a military state. The effect upon the characters of its citizens is well shown in Lecky's *History of European Morals*:—

"The Roman," he says, "had learnt to value force very highly. Being continually engaged in inflicting pain, his natural or instinctive humanity was very low. . . . Indomitable pride was the most prominent element of his character. A victorious army which is humble or diffident, or tolerant of insult, or anxious to take the second place, is, indeed, almost a contradiction of terms. . . . On

[1] Diogenes Laertius, vii. 123.

the other hand, the habits of men were unaffected, frugal, honourable and laborious. A stern discipline pervading all ages and classes of society, the will was trained, to an almost unexampled degree, to repress the passions, to endure suffering and opposition, to tend steadily and fearlessly towards an unpopular end. A sense of duty was very widely diffused, and a deep attachment to the interests of the city became the parent of many virtues." [1]

The rigour and severity of ancient Rome is illustrated by the *patria potestas*. The Roman father was absolute head of his house and exercised the power of life and death over all its members: even when his sons attained manhood and possessed families of their own they were not exempt from his authority. Many instances of its relentless exercise, regarded by the Greeks as intolerable tyranny, are recorded with respect by the national historians.

But if the most distinctive mark of the Roman nature was hardness, there went with it a strength which no other country could resist. By the middle of the second century before Christ the supremacy of Rome was manifest. A series of wars left her without a rival in the political world, heir of Alexander, protector of Greece and mistress of the Orient. From this point a twofold current of conflicting tendencies flowed westward. While the Roman conquerors returned with enormous stores of treasure and all the instruments of Eastern luxury, there followed also in their train the Greek philosopher preaching the creed of Epicurus or the Porch. The immediate effect was disastrous, for the old traditions of Roman society gave way before the new ideas had had time to construct an alternative rule of life. In the atmosphere of irresponsible power the primitive integrity of the Roman fathers died. The Government proved in-

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 224.

adequate to ious extension of its authority. The town had become a world-capital, containing nearly a million souls; the State an Empire stretching from the deserts of Africa to the German Ocean, bounded on one side by the Straits of Gibraltar and on the other by the Euphrates. Commercial interests acquired more and more weight in the foreign policy of the Senate. As the value of the provinces increased, the struggle of parties at home became more bitter and unscrupulous. A century of civil war, which devastated Italy and reduced most of the inhabitants to the verge of penury, while the wealth and resources of civilization were shared between a few capitalists, left one man undisputed master through all this vast territory, lord of life and death over fifty millions of men. What Julius Caesar might have achieved, had he lived to carry out his reforms it is impossible to determine; but in reducing Italy and the provinces to one level he certainly took a great step towards the unification of the Empire, though the admission of all free men to the full rights of Roman citizenship was not actually realized till A.D. 216. But even while political distinctions of status remained, the magnificent facilities for travel and permeation of Greek language and ideas, together with the absence of racial or colour prejudices and the absorption of all nationalities and religions, had produced a practical homogeneity throughout the ancient world by the time that Christianity entered it.

Hitherto we have been occupied with causes or antecedents. We have tried to account for the condition of affairs in the first century in our era. It is now time to turn to the actual period and examine

the picture which we have been allowed to expect—a society in process of decomposition but giving promise already of a new order of things. The picture, it is only fair to remind ourselves, must be far from complete. The evidence for a full description of provincial life is still being collected; but even the partial testimony of ancient literature may serve to show a movement within the Pagan world fertilizing the old soil and preparing it to receive new seed.

In many of these essential features the early Roman Empire presents astonishing parallels to modern society.

"It has never been difficult for me to realize," writes its most recent historian, "that contemporary Europe and America, the Europe and America of railroads, industries, and monstrous swift-growing cities, might find present in ancient Rome a part of their own very souls—restless, turbulent, greedy." [1]

In material civilization, at least, a high level of prosperity was maintained. The "majesty of the Roman peace" and the large extent of municipal independence permitted by the central authority covered the provinces with flourishing cities. Every year our excavations are bringing to light traces of highly organized communities in regions where desert and solitude now prevail.

"The world is filled," said a panegyrist of the age, "with gymnasia, fountains, porticoes, temples, factories and schools: the whole earth flourishes like a garden." [2]

The great roads which spanned the empire from end to end, the security of the inland sea, and the absence

[1] Ferrero, *Characters and Events of Roman History* (Lowell Lectures for 1909), p. 248. The whole book is an enlargement and illustration of the text.

[2] Aristides, *Or.* xiv. 391 (quoted by Dill, p. 197).

of protective tariffs, gave an enormous impulse to industrial production. The new countries of Gaul, Spain and Britain vied with, and in some respects surpassed, the old manufactures of Asia and the East. The new middle class offered a market for cheap imitations and popularized luxuries. The increase of trade between the different parts of the world led to a great development in letter-writing, while at home civic intercourse was fostered by innumerable clubs and private societies.

"Among the many parallels which can be drawn between the first centuries of the Christian era and our own times there is probably none more striking than that of their common tendency towards the formation of associations. There were, as now, associations for almost innumerable purposes. In almost all parts of the Empire there were trade guilds and dramatic guilds: there were athletic clubs and burial clubs and dining clubs: there were friendly societies and literary societies and financial societies. If we omit those special products of our own time, natural science and social science, there was scarcely any object for which men combine now that they did not combine then." [1]

No institution of ancient life so favoured the growth of Christianity as these societies; and indeed the local churches owed chiefly to them whatever status or organization they originally possessed.

Nor was the Government entirely without a sense of economic responsibility. Sumptuary laws to check individual extravagance were continually being passed. Evidence has been found for the existence of a Poor Rate in Egypt.[2] In Rome the lower classes had been encouraged to look to the State for free food and amusement. In 46 B.C., 320,000 citizens were receiv-

[1] Hatch, *Bampton Lectures*, 1880, p. 26. See also Renan, *Les Apôtres*, p. 350.

[2] *Expository Times*, Nov. 1908, p. 90.

ing daily grants of corn, at a cost to the Empire of £650,000 a year. Caesar reduced the number, which seems to have become fixed at 200,000. Originally a political bribe to the masses, its continuance by the Emperors has caused some perplexity to historians; but as recent research has discovered traces of similar institutions in Greek municipalities, perhaps those are right who see in it a deliberate attempt to solve a difficulty not confined to ancient cities, and a recognition that "the main duty of an enlightened Government is to pauperize its people." [1]

Corruption is most evident in the upper classes. The political revolution greatly interfered with their traditional occupations of waging war and administering affairs, and even what opportunities were left them, most showed little inclination to employ. Instead, all sorts of personal interests occupied their time—intellectual culture, the pleasures of art, sensual extravagances, and every form of sport. What little education there was tended solely to develop the instinct of rhetoric, or, as we should say, journalism. It was essentially a superficial age; its notes are nervous hustle and purposeless activity. The lines of Horace are well known:—

> "Caelum, non animum, mutant qui trans mare currunt.
> Strenua nos exercet inertia,"

and Seneca two generations later writes in a similar strain [2]. But the censure of court poets and court philosophers only records the failure of the Government's efforts to restore a bygone simplicity. Society, then, as now, invented countless claims upon the leisure of its members.

[1] Bussell, *The School of Plato*, p. 11.
[2] Horace, *Epistles*, I. xi. 27. Cf. Seneca, *De Tranquillitate*, 12.

"It is astonishing," writes Pliny, "how time is spent in Rome. Take any day by itself and it either is, or seems to be, well spent; then review many days together, and you will be surprised to discover how unprofitable they have been. Ask any one—'What have you done to-day?' He will tell you, 'I was at a friend's giving his son the *toga virilis*, another requested me to be witness to his will, a third asked me to a consultation. All of these things appear at the time to be extremely necessary, but when we reflect that day after day has been thus spent, such employment seems trifling." [1]

Still there were those who, like Pliny himself, found other means of filling their time and spending their money. Any public calamity or wide-spread disaster excited the most general interest and found practical sympathy. In 17 A.D. an earthquake destroyed twelve of the most populous cities of Asia Minor. Tiberius at once promised a sum of £83,000 and remitted all taxation for five years, while the Senate despatched a commission of inquiry and relief. Ten years later the collapse of an amphitheatre at Fidena killed or maimed fifty thousand persons. The houses of the gentry were thrown open, and every form of medical aid was placed at the disposal of the sufferers.[2]

"There has probably seldom been a time," writes Dr. Dill, "when wealth was more generally regarded as a trust. . . . There was never an age in which the wealthy more frankly and even recklessly recognized this imperious claim." [3]

Pliny, according to the estimate of the same writer, spent £80,000 in benevolence. The endowment of institutions for the support of poor children,[4] begun by the Emperor Nerva, was continued by private individuals. Charitable bequests are frequent in the in-

[1] Pliny, *Epistles*, I. ix.
[2] Tacitus, *Annals*, ii. 47, iv. 63
[3] Dill, *Roman Society*, p. 231.
[4] Pliny, *Panegyric*, 28; *Epistles*, VII. xviii.

scriptions. A stone, erected by the grateful community, commemorates the gift by an Italian Apothecary of £60 and 300 jars of "aromatic herbs" for the free distribution of drugs to the sick and needy of his township.[1]

So much then for the aspects in which the Imperial Age most strikingly resembles our own. There remain four points in which it was peculiar—the position of women, the public games, the institution of slavery and the influence of philosophy. In each of the first three we shall find traces of the growth of a humaner spirit, while in the fourth will be seen the main source and limitation of its power.

Nowhere were the signs of change more manifest than in family life. Parental despotism was too heroic or too harsh for these later days, and a Roman knight, in the time of Augustus, who exercised the traditional privilege of flogging his son to death, was almost torn in pieces by the mob.[2] The position of women was one of complete social and moral emancipation, and while possessing few legal rights, they enjoyed a greater amount of personal freedom than has ever been permitted them since. They seem to have paid for it by losing the respect of those whose privileges they invaded. To Tacitus, Agrippina showed herself an unnatural mother in seeking to share with Nero his imperial burden.[3] But they were still regarded in general as the instrument of men's pleasure, and even the philosophers seem to have thought it hardly worth while to protest. Epictetus credits no woman with thoughts above sensual gratification.[4] Indeed, nothing in Pagan literature so scandalizes the modern reader as the light-heartedness with which every violation of sexual

[1] *Inscr. Orelli*, 114.
[2] Seneca, *De Clementia*, i. 15.
[3] Tacitus, *Annals*, xiii. 5.
[4] Epictetus, *Manual*, 40.

morality was regarded and even practised. The tremendous emphasis laid by the early Church upon personal purity was the necessary reaction. For even when men had begun to understand the value of human life, they had still to learn the sanctity of their own bodies. Yet one inscription has been found commemorating a Society for the Preservation of Chastity,[1] and many others preserve the record of lives passed in innocence and fidelity, while history contains some notable instances in which husband and wife taught one another how to die.

It is probably true of all nations that their public entertainments exhibit their worst side, but the Roman games are deservedly notorious. No description can surpass the horrors of the reality: they appealed to the lowest and most brutal passions of which human nature is capable. The gladiatorial shows were evolved out of the Etruscan practice of offering human sacrifices to the shades of the dead, and were introduced into Rome at the beginning of the foreign wars. From the first the blood and treasure of the conquered nations was dedicated to their embellishment; but as the Games increased in popularity, there gradually arose a professional class, each member of which was under contract "to let himself be chained, scourged, burnt or killed without opposition, if the laws of the institution should so require." Criticism or protest in the days of the Republic is hardly audible. "To some, I know," writes Cicero[2], "the exhibition of the gladiators seems cruel and inhuman, and perhaps, as things are done nowadays, they are right. But what an example of courage," he continues, "what contempt of death! No better instance of discipline can

[1] Inser. Orelli, 2401.

[2] Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, ii. 41.

be presented to the eye." A hundred thousand are said to have fought during the reign of Augustus. Passion for these spectacles ran like a disease through all sections of the community, irrespective of age, sex, or rank.

"What room is left for liberal arts," asks a contemporary,[1] "when the mind is preoccupied and obsessed with such enthusiasms? In how many homes will you find any other subject of conversation? What else do we hear discussed by our young men, if we enter their lecture rooms? Nor indeed does any theme more frequently engross their instructors."

And Juvenal complains that the disaster of Cannae could not have caused more consternation among the Romans of that day than is shown by their descendants at the defeat of a popular side in the arena.[2] We are perhaps hardly in a position to condemn this misdirection of the public interest, but at least its object in our day is more innocent.

From Rome the Games spread to the provinces. Only in Greece, with the exception of the half-foreign port of Corinth, did they fail to secure a foothold. When an attempt was made to introduce them into Athens, a philosopher bade the people first overthrow the Altar of Pity. Greek ideas, indeed, inspired the initial opposition. It is in philosophers like Seneca that we first find a sense of revolt openly expressed.

"The Games," he writes, "are mere massacres," and again, "man, a sacred thing, is butchered to make a holiday for his fellows."[3]

Such utterances were not altogether fruitless; and later Emperors, such as Vespasian and Marcus Aurelius, discouraged the shows, though many years had to

[1] *Dialogus de claris oratoribus*, 29. [2] Juvenal, xi. 185.
[3] Seneca, *Epistles*, vii. 3, xcv. 33.

pass and stronger influences arise before they ceased altogether.

Another institution of the period, whose history illustrates the same conflict between a traditional disregard for human life and a growth of more humane sentiments, is slavery. Every community has at one or another stage in its development contained a class of men doomed, by birth or the fortunes of war, to live dependent on the whims of others, unprotected by any legal status and regarded by society as mere machinery to minister to its convenience. To the Law, the slave was not a person, but a thing, at the absolute disposal of his owner. But the actual lot of the slave has varied immensely according to the character of his masters. In Greece his position was worse in theory than in fact.

"In no country of the ancient world were slaves treated with such humanity as in Hellas; it was not the law, but custom that forbade the Greek to sell his slaves to a non-Greek master, and so banished from this region the slave-trade proper." [1]

But at Rome all the vices of the national temperament combined to make his life intolerable: against its lust and cruelty he had for centuries no redress. The callousness with which the elder Cato sold in their declining years the slaves who had worn out their energies in his service shocked his biographer, Plutarch.[2] A Roman might have considered it enough that they had been spared so long! Brutal punishments and death itself were inflicted upon them for the slightest faults, or even with no excuse at all. The lines of Juvenal are well known:—

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[1] Mommsen, *Provinces of the Roman Empire*, p. 272.
[2] Plutarch, *Cato Major*, v.

" 'Go, crucify that slave.' 'For what offence?
Who the accuser? Where the evidence?
For when the life of man is in debate,
No time can be too long, no care too great;
Hear all, weigh all with caution, I advise——'
'Thou sniveller! is a slave a *man?*" she cries.
'He's innocent! be't so: 'tis my command,
My will; let that, sir, for a reason stand.'" [1]

In one of his epistles, Seneca describes the fashionable aristocrat at dinner, surrounded by a multitude of slaves, each a specialist in some minute item of the ceremony.

"He eats more than he can hold, but his unfortunate slaves must not so much as move their lips. Every sound is threatened with the whip; not even an accidental cough or sigh is forgiven. The slightest violation of the silence is dearly paid for. All night they stand dumb and fasting. Hence the proverb 'in every slave an enemy': we make them so. I pass over the inhumanities which we perpetrate upon them as though they were brute beasts. . . . One carves the costly birds, guiding a trained hand through breast and back along prescribed curves. Unhappy being, whose sole mission in life it is to carve fowls properly."

Then he contrasts this behaviour with the attitude dictated by philosophy:—

"So live with an inferior as you would have a superior live with you. Admit a slave to your conversation, even to your table. Let some dine with you because they are worthy: others that they may become so. 'He is a slave'—but perhaps his spirit is free. A slave! what harm is there in that? Show me one who is not! Some are slaves to lust, others to avarice or ambition; all to fear. I can name you a magistrate the slave of a hag; a Croesus enslaved by a waiting-woman, young noblemen at the beck of actresses: no servitude is so disgraceful as that which we impose upon ourselves." [2]

Elsewhere his writings exhibit the same influence.

[1] Juvenal, vi. 219.—W. Gifford's translation.
[2] Seneca, *Epistles*, xlvii.

"Philosophy knows no respect of persons, and recognizes no patent of nobility but its own. We must consider not the origin but the goal." [1]

and again :—

"A man should keep within reasonable bounds in his treatment of slaves. Even when they are our absolute property we ought to consider not how much we may torture them with impunity, but how far such conduct is permitted by natural humanity and justice. While all things are lawful towards a slave, some things are not lawful towards a man: the very Law of Nature forbids. Because Vedius Pollio fed his lampreys with human blood, he was execrated by society even more than he was hated by his slaves. Cruel masters are pointed at with loathing in all parts of the city." [2]

History records several instances where a new tone in public opinion made itself felt. When slaves suffered from disease which seemed incurable, it had been the custom to expose or kill them. The Emperor Claudius made the latter course a criminal act, and gave those who were exposed their freedom.[3] If a master was murdered by a slave, the law decreed that all the slaves beneath the same roof should be put to death. A case occurred in the year 61, and 400 were led out to execution. "The people rose," says Tacitus, "to defend the innocent, and protests against such excessive severity were heard even in the Senate." The speech of the conservative spokesman, Cassius, is very significant :—

"A slave was always suspect to our ancestors, even when he was born upon their estates or in their houses, and felt from the first affection for his master. But now that our households contain nations, separated by diverse customs and worshipping foreign gods or none at all, the only possible restraint is that of fear."

The majority decided that the law must take its course,

[1] Seneca, *Epistles*, xliv. [2] Seneca, *de Clementia*, i. 18.
[3] Suetonius, *Claudius*, 25.

and the sentence was carried out by the soldiers in the face of a dense and threatening mob.[1] Gradually, however, limitations were imposed upon the absolutism of the masters. A law was passed forbidding slaves to be matched against wild beasts in the arena, and under Antoninus they were not allowed to be put to death without a cause assigned. Subsequent legislation "appointed officers through all the provinces to hear the complaints of slaves; enjoined that no master should treat his slaves with excessive severity, and commanded that when such severity was proved, the master should be compelled to sell the slave he had ill-treated."[2] Finally the jurists accepted the maxim of philosophy that all men are by nature free.

Thus for social amelioration, as for guidance in moral and spiritual problems, men looked more and more to the philosophers. We have seen what philosophy was to Epictetus. Juvenal, Plutarch and Marcus Aurelius say much the same. The evidence of the first is perhaps the most striking, as coming from one who is, as we may say, not only a layman but even an anticlerical. Possibly his recantation is too generous:

> "Divine philosophy! by whose pure light,
> We first distinguish, then pursue the right,
> Thy power the breast from every error frees,
> And weeds out all its vices by degrees."[3]

Plutarch speaks more soberly:—

"The crown of all our education should be philosophy; it is the only remedy for the weaknesses and diseases of the soul. It is by its advice and assistance that we distinguish right from wrong,

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[1] Tacitus, *Annals*, xiv. 42.
[2] Lecky, *op. cit.*, p. 308. See Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, iii. 22.
[3] Juvenal, xii. 187, Gifford.

what is just from what is unjust, what is good from what is evil. It teaches us how to conduct ourselves in all relations ; to worship the gods, honour our parents, reverence our elders, obey our laws, be subject to our rulers, love our friends, behave to our wives with restraint, our children with affection, to our servants without arrogance. Chiefest lesson of all, it teaches us not to be overjoyed in prosperity, or overwhelmed in misfortune, not to be dissolute in our pleasures, nor furious and brutal in our passions." [1]

"What is man's life?" asks Marcus at the end of his second book.

"Life," he answers, "is a warfare and a sojourning, and after-fame oblivion. What then can be our guide? One thing, and one alone —Philosophy—which keeps the spirit within unspotted and without offence, superior to pleasures or sorrows, doing nothing foolishly or with deceitfulness . . . and finally awaiting death, the dissolution, with serenity." [2]

But the philosophers, we must remember, were not so much men of speculative originality or profound learning as professional experts in the problems of daily life. In varying ranks and stations, inmates of palaces, like Seneca, or wandering for conscience' sake in exile, like Dio Chrysostom, they formed the clergy of the Pagan world, and exalted by their neighbours upon a moral pedestal, made an easy target for the satirists who preferred to emphasize the defects of their practice rather than the excellences of their preaching. But no class of men, now or then, may fairly be judged by such a test, and though some philosophers, no doubt, conformed too much to the fashion of this world, they played a necessary and important part in the general preparation. To them it belonged to offer consolation to the bereaved, to rebuke the ostentation of the rich, and make a stand against the tyranny of rulers. They preached the natural equality of man beneath the

[1] Plutarch, *De Liberis Educandis*, x.
[2] Marcus Aurelius, *To himself*, ii. 17.

sovereignty of heaven, and inculcated upon all the duty of benevolence to their fellows. They painted the pleasures of a simple life, and commended a kindly tolerance towards the faults of others, and a resolute and cheerful bearing of whatever fortune or providence might send. These are the themes which fill the essays of Seneca and Plutarch, and inspire the sermons of Dio and Epictetus. It was from such sources eventually that the Emperor Marcus Aurelius derived his "conception of an equal commonwealth based on equality of right and equality of speech, and of imperial rule respecting first and foremost the liberty of the subject." [1] These lessons, which the upper classes received through literature and lectures, were preached to others in their market-places. If Dio complains of his order that

> "They do not go to the people, despairing perhaps of their ability to ameliorate the masses," [2]

we may infer that he at least recognized the obligation and strove to discharge it. The Stoics, admits an early Father,[3] did not leave even slaves or women unevangelized. Wearing the ragged cloak of a beggar, and with a book in his left hand, the bearded "sophist" was a familiar sight in every town, and everywhere found eager audiences, imploring guidance in moral questions. In one of his discourses Epictetus has drawn a picture of the ideal missionary. "Let no man rashly assume that office without a consciousness of his vocation. He is an ambassador from God sent to proclaim to men the error of their ways and show them a more excellent road to happiness. Let

[1] Marcus Aurelius, "*To himself*," i. 14.
[2] Dio, *or.* xxxii.
[3] Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, iii. 23.

him prepare himself by emptying his heart of all desires ; his life must have nothing to conceal. Because of the stress of this present evil time, let him go without encumbrances, calling no home his own, attended by no servant, and professing himself a citizen of no earthly country ; patient of ill-treatment, and commending in his own person the doctrines which he preaches." [1]

It is a high ideal, and yet there is surely something wanting. It has nothing to say with regard to the preacher's audience : they are taken for granted, as so many cases of the disease which must ensue where philosophy is not known. There is no realization of "my neighbour" as a *concrete* individual. Relations are regarded as "encumbrances." In the same spirit he speaks elsewhere of wives and children as "bits of shell or weed," which the voyager on the sea of life may pick up at a port of call: "but when the captain calls, drop everything and hurry back to the ship." [2] Passion and pity, we remember, were both vices and alien to the sage. This limitation appears in a curious passage of Seneca in his treatise "On Clemency." He is discussing the relation of that virtue to pity, which he says is parallel to the relation of faith to superstition.

"Stoicism is often accused of being too hard, although no sect is more benign or gentle, more kindly affectioned towards men, or more attentive to the common welfare. But pity is a vice. A man cannot maintain the same level of greatness, if fear and sorrow darken and contract his mind, and therefore he will not pity, since he cannot do so without a piteousness within, though he will gladly do all that pity usually suggests." [3]

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[1] Epictetus, *Dissertations*, iii. 22. [2] *Manual*, vii.
[3] Seneca, *De Clementia*, ii. 5.

But, unless the distinction is without meaning, that is just what he cannot do. The mind that values its own serenity too high to risk it in the service of another can never enter into the sympathy which prompts true assistance. Those who

> "counsel and speak comfort to that grief
> Which they themselves not feel,"

awake no response in the hearts of their fellows. They are more akin to the priest and levite than to the good Samaritan.

The same arrested benevolence is seen in Marcus Aurelius. At one time his thoughts turn to the great Community of Nature which will not allow anyone of us to isolate himself.

> "Have you ever seen a dismembered hand, or foot, or decapitated head, lying severed from the body to which it belonged? Such does a man, so far as he is able, make himself when he refuses to accept what befalls, and isolates himself, or when he pursues self-seeking action. You are cast out from the unity of Nature of which you are an organic part; you dismember your own self." [1]

At another, the egotistic motive, and the limits of its energy, are more apparent.

> "In one respect men are our nearest duty, in so far as we are bound to suffer them and do them good. But in so far as particular individuals interfere with my proper functions, man becomes to me a thing indifferent, no less than sun or wind or beast of the field." [2]

"We are bound to suffer them and do them good!" That is the high-water mark of Stoic altruism. At best our fellows are the exercising ground for our virtues, or a trial sent to discipline us by an inscrutable Providence. There is always a note of condescension in the message; the preacher is preoccupied with

[1] *To Himself*, viii. 34; cf. Epictetus, *Dissertations*, ii. 5.
[2] *Ibidem*, v. 20.

himself. Like the White Knight, "he is thinking of a way" to improve himself, "and so has no reply to give" to them that labour and are heavy laden. To the appeal of mere philosophy the world answers that it "patches grief with proverbs" and is more ready to preach the necessity for reform than to provide the motive power for its realization. It may induce men to change the topic of conversation in deference to the presence of the philosopher,[1] but it has seldom produced any alteration in their habits. And so we do not wonder at the final pessimism with which Seneca exclaims :—

"Vice ebbs and flows like a tide. Evil we are, evil we have been and, though reluctantly I say it, evil we shall ever be."[2]

To conclude, we see that human nature without Christ was then just what it is now. Men were not altogether without hearts or sympathies and did not lack consciousness of failure and impulses to better things. But there is an absence of any vivifying spirit, there is no power to replace weakness by strength, to conquer lust or selfishness; above all there is no *enthusiasm*. The ideal of the Brotherhood of Man broke down for lack of an adequate conception of the Fatherhood of God. Men had no hope because they found no faith.[3] Even now, in a society still only tinged by the Spirit of Christ, we may note the same contrast between the senseless extravagances of a few and the

[1] See Petronius, 85.

[2] Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, i. 10.

[3] This is well brought out in connection with Marcus Aurelius by T. R. Glover, *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, pp. 197 ff.

monotonous pauperism of many (a contrast only heightened by our increased command of material resources), the same reign of sensual desire and moral perversion, the same symptoms in short as those in which St. Paul saw a revelation of the Wrath of God.

But already the true Light was coming into the world. We have now to watch its reception and follow its victorious growth. New seed will be sown throughout the Mediterranean world, but how many tares, sprung from previous sowings, will appear among the wheat? How far will old conventions and presuppositions survive, and the conquered once more impose conditions on the Conqueror?

IV

The Christian Ideal as Realized in the Primitive Church

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ARGUMENT.

The Kingdom and the Church—The Blending of Jewish and Gentile Ideas in Practical Piety.

I. The Christian Life of the Early Jewish Christianity—The Idyllic Simplicity of the Primitive Community—More Reflective and Organized Forms Gradually Assumed—The Influence of the Gospel on the Communities of the Dispersion—The Didactic and other Writings—The Testimony of Pliny.

II. The Christian Life of the Early Gentile Churches—The Hindrances to Christian Brotherhood—The Full Fellowship of all Believers—The Recognition of the Supreme Value of Moral Personality—The Application of Sacrificial Language to Christian Service—The Spiritualization of the Whole of Life—Application of the Christian Principle to the Home and the Household, Husband and Wife, Parent and Child, Social Intercourse Generally—The Correspondence of the Actual Practice with these Characteristics—Discipline Corporate in Spirit and in Form—The Eucharist as a Bond of Unity—Ignatius' Insistence on Fellowship—The Communion Service a Fountain-head of Christian Altruism—The Subsequent Transformations of the Primitive Social Feast—The Discipline of the Church's Public Opinion—The Relation of the Church to Society in General—Love as the Keystone of the whole Fabric of Christian Conduct.

The Principle of Selection in the Picture given—The Worldly Spirit in the Church as Reflected in the *Shepherd of Hermas* and the *Second Epistle of Clement*—Importance of Discovering the Moral Forces in Early Christianity, their Religious Springs and Social Issue—The Demand of Economic Justice as well as Redemptive Pity.

IV

The Christian Ideal as Realized in the Primitive Church

In previous essays the growth of the Christian ideal has been traced. We have seen first its emergence in a Chosen People, and then its fulfilment in the person and teaching of Jesus, God's Anointed, the destined Head of a people filled with a like spirit of filial holiness and love. We have now to consider how far the early Church actually realized its vocation to embody the spirit of Christ in human life, personal, social, and civic. Our chief concern is with the social manifestations of the Christian impulse and principle. But since these work from within, from the regenerated consciousness of the individual, outwards to their social issues, the "Kingdom of God" within the human soul as character must be kept constantly in view. The "Kingdom" as realized in a renewed society, comes through the spread of the Kingdom as filial loyalty in its personal units, after the type exemplified in Jesus as Son of Man. In fact a new sense of personality, of the moral value of each soul as directly related to God, was perhaps the chief ethical contribution of the Gospel, the spring of its dynamic for illimitable progress, individual and social. It is with the operation of this new master-idea, while

as yet it shone with fresh splendour for the eye of humanity, that ths essay will have largely to deal. When the Church began to conceive of salvation less in terms of personality than of "grace" abstracted from moral experience, at that moment it began also to depart from its original spirit.

While it is needful at times to study Jewish and Gentile Christianity apart, in relation to the native atmosphere and antecedents of each, it is not so in the present instance save in quite a minor degree. It was in the practical piety of daily life that all types of Christians most agreed, standing out as such from their several social environments in virtue of marked common features. These features we are now to examine in a summary and connected fashion, with a view to realize their dependence on a common faith or attitude to life, due to the action of the Gospel of Christ. Yet one fact tending to explain the similarity even of the forms in which the evangelic impulse took effect among Jewish and Gentile believers, must be kept steadily in mind; namely, the blending of Jewish and Gentile ideals which had already come about in certain circles. The Jews had spread widely beyond Palestine, especially around the eastern Mediterranean; Graeco-Roman civilization had invaded Palestine, the Holy Land of the Jews; and each type had in a measure leavened the other. The results were the Graecized Jew, or Hellenist, and the corresponding semi-Jewish or "God-fearing" Gentile. Here the Jewish faith contributed the essential religious and moral elements; but the liberal and cosmopolitan temper, as well as the forms of culture characterizing both classes, was due mainly to Greek influences dating from the conquests of Alexander,

and in a lesser degree to Roman. Northern Syria, Asia Minor, Alexandria, and Rome itself, all contained large and influential Hellenistic or semi-Jewish populations: and as the Gospel naturally made its first and strongest appeal to these, we are prepared to find fundamental resemblances in the Christian life as it took shape in such regions. Generally speaking, then, it was only in certain Palestinian communities that the exclusive Jewish spirit, with its national caste customs, persisted among Christians. Apart from these the universal spirit of the Gospel gradually established itself in the eyes of most Christians of Jewish birth and training, as traced in the book of Acts. The detail, indeed, in which it describes the process whereby Jewish limitations gave way under the lead of the Spirit, shows how great were the barriers overcome and how potent the ideas operative in this moral and social revolution. We do not think enough of the heroism of faith and sacrifice to which the Evangelic spirit braced those Jews who made the great renunciation involved in admitting the Gentiles as "brethren" in Israel,—in simple loyalty to the Spirit of God manifest in such souls as "purified by faith," apart even from certain requirements of that Law upon which God had so long placed honour among His people. Whither "the Spirit of Jesus" led they followed, "not knowing whither they went," but leaving an example to Christians in all ages of the duty of following the gleam visible in the fresh openings of Providence, yet always in continuity with the spirit underlying the progress of the past. Such is ever the prophetic spirit. But never did it win a more striking victory. The warning as to the penalty of disobedience to such a call is no less impressive. As the progressive section of Judean

Christianity was rewarded with undreamt-of fruitfulness, so the conservative was blasted with sterility. "Crushed by the letter of Jesus"—the letter of the example of a Master who had Himself conformed on the whole to the usages of the Law, though in sovereign freedom of spirit—they "died a lingering death."[1] Aloof alike from national Judaism and from the Christian Church as a whole, Ebionism became "heresy" in the eyes of both. There is food for reflexion and heart-searching here. It affords a signal instance of the law of spiritual life through death to the letter of even a sacred past, exemplified already in the Head of the Church Himself, but to be fulfilled in His Church again and again, notably at the great Reformation wherein the modern Christian world was born out of the medieval.

The Christian ideal, life as lived under the sway of love for God as holy Father and for men as related to Him, was too rich in moral possibilities to be fully realized at once in any one circle of Christians, if indeed in all taken together. It asserted itself piecemeal, here on one side, there on another, according to prior training, yet in all cases raising to a higher power the purer and more humane elements in existing moral life, and paralysing or controlling the selfish and morbid ones. But as these differed largely according as Jewish training did or did not determine the life of the community, we find at first two rather distinct types of Christian piety; though these tend more and more to blend into a common type in the second Christian generation.

[1] Harnack, *Expansion of Christianity*, i. 73 f.; compare Hort, *Judaistic Christianity*, p. 37.

I

Christian life in the primitive community at Jerusalem was at first characterized by an idyllic simplicity. The brethren were absorbed in immediately religious duties to God and man, with little or no reflexion as to the future and the conditions imposed by ordinary social wants in such a world as this. They were expecting the present order soon to give place to another : hence religion was 'all in all' in a very obvious sense. To feel and express grateful love to God for His redemptive acts in Christ, whether past or future (both being to their feelings wondrously *nigh*), and to extend the expression of devotion into their relations with others, as embraced within the scope of God's fatherliness—that was the sum of the matter. In such an atmosphere all was worship and all was unity, whether they hung on the Apostles' lips for further knowledge of their Master's ways, or expressed their fellowship in the intimate communion of simple meals that recalled the recent and sacred union of Jesus and His personal disciples. How far the spirit of "all things in common" carried them in practice is not quite clear. But certainly there was no compulsion and no formal system about their doings in those early days, even when certain went the length of selling their goods to supply the needs of others. What was distinctively Christian, directly expressive of the new bond between them as Messiah's followers, was domestic in form ("at home"), though they also assembled about their leaders for instruction within the Temple precincts. Thus in exultant gladness and openheartedness they lived the life of absolute human "communion" (*koinonia*), and all alike was "holiness to the Lord" (Acts ii. 42–47).

Of course, this state of simple "enthusiasm," without thought for the morrow in any sense, could not continue unchanged. It gradually assumed more reflective and organized forms, one of which was the daily distribution of the necessaries of life to those utterly dependent, especially the widows and orphans of the community, an institution which we see developing in the pages of Acts (iv. 34 f.; vi. 1 ff.). But that the primitive community long remained "of one heart and soul," so that the spirit of egoism in the use of possessions was largely swallowed up by love, we have reason to believe. In this sense they continued to "have all things common," and to regard lack of brotherly sympathy the most grievous breach of the law of Christ,—"the regal law of liberty" in love. This appears not only from the tone of the Epistle of James,[1] but also from the emphatic teaching of a Gospel current among certain old-fashioned believers in the latter part of the century, which had large affinity with the element common to our Gospels of Matthew and Luke. In this "Gospel according to Hebrews" it was said that he was guilty of the worst kind of sin "who grieved the spirit of his brother": and the Lord was reported as having said to His disciples, "And never be ye glad save when ye have looked on your brother in love." If further confirmation were needed, it exists in the teaching of the "Two Ways," a Jewish-Christian catechism widely current in primitive times, and probably going back in substance to the earliest days. Among its injunc-

[1] This writing presents Christian piety as the fulfilment of the ideal spirit of the Jewish Law as expounded by the Prophets and the Sermon on the Mount, and illustrates how needful was the new Christian dynamic to the realization of the ideal of Divine brotherhood.

tions was this:[1] "Thou shalt not turn away from him that is in want, but shalt make thy brother partaker in all things, and shalt not say that they are thy very own. For if we are fellow-partakers in that which is imperishable, how much more in the things perishable?" How essential to true faith such conduct was held to be, appears also from the fact that "remembrance of the poor" was put forward by the leaders of the Judaean Church as the sole condition[2] of their recognition of the Christianity otherwise proved to exist among Paul's Gentile converts—a "fruit" of living faith which Paul was no less eager to foster.

So far we have dealt mainly with Christian life in Palestine, the Holy Land of Judaism, where a high ethical ideal was traditional and needed chiefly to be raised to a higher power and range by a new spiritual impulse. But in the communities of the Dispersion the morality of Old Testament religion existed amid more mixed and complicated conditions, which, if they tended to emancipate both Jew and proselyte from the narrowness of much Palestinian piety, tended also to make simplicity and unworldliness of character harder of attainment. How the Gospel worked as a renewing and refining leaven in such circles also, may be seen in the *Didaché* or "Teaching of the Apostles," which embodies the "Two Ways" in a form showing how the more negative traits of Judaism

[1] *Didache*, iv. 8.

[2] Gal. ii. 10, cf. James' Epistle, ii. 15 ff., where care for a brother's bodily needs is made the typical test of living faith. Paul's concern for the same quality goes far beyond collections for "the poor of the saints in Jerusalem" (Rom. xvi. 26 f., cf. Acts xi. 30; xii. 25); it is part of the "kindness and goodness" which he regards as "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. v. 22 f., vi. 10, Rom. xii. 8, 13).

gradually felt the touch of a larger and more loving spirit. The essence of the Way of Life is indeed left as it was originally adopted from Jewish oral "teaching" for proselytes in the Dispersion. "First, thou shalt love God *who made thee*; secondly, thy neighbour as thyself; and all things whatsoever thou wouldest *not* have done to thee, do thou also *not* do to another." [1] But the sub-Christian features were gradually supplemented, first by additions breathing the spirit of the Golden Rule of positive love and then by incorporation of those precepts of Christ which embody it most strikingly (ch. i. 3 ff.). "For what grace is it if ye love them that love you? Do not even the Gentiles the same? But love ye them that hate you, and ye shall not have an enemy." Then follows the law of meek forbearance under injury, with a view to overcoming evil not with its own weapons but with good, which is characteristic of early Christianity in all circles, and the spirit of which is nowhere more nobly expounded and illustrated than in Paul's Epistles. "Render to no man evil for evil. . . . Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto wrath. . . . Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Owe no man anything, save to love one another; for he that loveth his neighbour, hath fulfilled the law. . . . Love is long-suffering, is kind, . . . seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh no note of evil, . . . hopeth all things, endureth all things" (Rom. xii. 17 ff.; 1 Cor. xiii. 4 ff.). Here we have not only practical rules, but also the motive which alone makes them practicable. The insight of the compiler of the *Didaché* does not carry him so far, and he sets forth

[1] This appears in the early addition to Acts xv. 20, 29, as "All things which ye would not have happen to yourselves, do not to another."

this particular part of the Christian ideal as a counsel of perfection ("thou shalt be perfect"); yet he takes it very seriously, as did all Christians at first.[1] He is filled also with the passion of sympathy for the appeal of want, wherever met. "Give to every one that asketh thee, and ask not again; for the Father willeth that to all should be given from His own unmerited gifts." Here again emerges an authentic note of the Christian spirit, the consciousness that all man has, is held on trust for its one and sole Giver, the heavenly Father, for whose ends therefore it ought in all loyalty to be utilized. "What have we that we have not received?" Thus Paul utters the same thought in a way which excludes not only all selfish use, but also "glorying" in any possession, spiritual or material, as if one had created it and it were one's very own (1 Cor. iv. 7, xii. 7, 25). Indeed this idea of utter dependence, and consequent stewardship as regards one's life and all its powers and resources, conjoined with that other master principle of Christ, love to God and man, may be said to have constituted the secret and power of early Christian conduct.

In other circles than that of the *Didaché* the Jewish limitations in the ethical ideal of the "Two Ways" were set aside somewhat differently,[2] and fresh applications of the principles of Christian living were made, still on lines unaffected by special Pauline influence. This was the case for instance

[1] Indeed, this has been a mark of most revivals of the Gospel manner of life; witness the early Franciscans, the Anabaptists and others in the sixteenth century, the Friends, certain minor Russian communities, and the Salvation Army.

[2] Thus the *Epistle of Barnabas*, representing Christianity in Alexandria about 70–80 A.D., in citing it omits a number of its more rudimentary precepts, e.g. those prohibiting certain things because they lead to others yet worse (*Did.* iii. 1–6).

in a far later attempt[1] to set forth the Apostolic type of moral teaching, yet one expressing what had long been the local Christian ideal in North Syria. Here the self-seeking and overreaching temper (*pleonexia*) and the spirit of retaliation are singled out as the great solvents of goodness. Very emphatic warning is also given against seeking the admiration of the other sex by adornment of the person, as placing temptation in the way of others, if not in one's own. This shows a fine sense of responsibility for the indirect effects of conduct, and brings home vividly to us the new love infused into humanity, that love which is "the identification of ourselves with God's interests in others." Truly did another writing[2] of much the same region and date, but belonging to a more Jewish circle, sum up Christian ethics in saying: "Every fair deed shall the love of man teach you to do, even as hatred of men suggests ill-doing." In this spirit Christian elders are to act as parents to orphans and as husbands to widows, with all cheerfulness supplying to them their livelihood, yet always subject to the sound maxim[3] "To the craftsman work, to the feeble alms." Love is still the secret; and love gains entrance in no way more effectively than through "the common partaking in salt." Hence mutual hospitality is to abound; for it leads to beneficence, and beneficence to salvation. Let all put their living at the disposal of the brethren in God, for such tem-

[1] The so-called Apostolic *Didascalia* (Bk. i.), put together in the course of the third century.

[2] *Epistle of Clement to James*, cc. viii. ff.

[3] Compare *Didachê*, xii. 3 f. If a brother from a distance "willeth to settle among you, and is a craftsman, let him work and (so) eat. But if he have no craft, according to your prudence provide that a Christian shall not live with you in idleness."

poral giving meets with eternal receiving. Give to the hungry, thirsty and naked; visit the sick; relieve those in prison; welcome to your homes the stranger. But Christian "philanthropy" extends further into the sphere of social relations. Let brethren at variance not go before the secular authorities, but be reconciled by the Church's elders, yielding them ready compliance. Nay, let the overreaching instinct (*pleonexia*) be shunned as a thing which for temporal gain sacrifices eternal good; let weights and measures be just, and trust-money be held sacred. Even chastity is intimately bound up with this fundamental "philanthropy," which affords the moral basis for God's mercy at the last.

Such a picture of Christian ethics—allowing for its semi-Jewish traits—not only recalls the *Didachê* (ch. xii.) with its catholic love for the stranger brother, balanced by wholesome provision against the vagrant idler who would "make merchandise of Christ," but also agrees with the impressions of an outsider that reach us in his own words. Pliny, the governor of Bithynia, writing about 112 A.D., reports that the Christians "used to assemble on a fixed day (the Lord's day) before dawn, recite responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god,[1] and pledge themselves with a religious vow (*sacramentum*) not to any crime, but against theft, robbery, adultery, breach of trust or denial of a deposit when claimed." Pliny may or may not be right in believing that these Christians at their weekly morning worship actually pledged themselves afresh to the moral ideal implied in allegiance to Christ. But his words at least cast vivid ligh.

[1] So Pliny would conceive the matter. Of such primitive hymns we may get an idea from Eph. v. 14, 1 Tim. iii. 16, cf. 2 Tim. ii. 11 f.

upon the idea of the Christian life, as distinct from that of the world around. They show the sort of vocation to which men felt themselves consecrated by baptism, which was then, as it is to-day on the mission field, regarded as finally setting the believer apart from the old manner of life to a totally new one. Thus baptism was associated with an explicit renunciation of the Way of Death, and an embracing of the Way of Life (as set forth in the *Didaché*, cf. ch. vii.). Its phrasing might differ locally, but its substance was one and the same, and intensely practical. The idea of a definite moral covenant as part of the new allegiance underlies all early references to baptism. Thus Justin Martyr, after stating the moral teaching of Christ (*Apol.* i. 15 f.), says that those who come forward for baptism "promise that they are able thus to conduct their life" (i. 61); and he describes the newly baptized as "covenanted" to Christ's service,[1] just as soldiers are to Caesar's (i. 65). That the military analogy was present to his mind, as to the mind of Christians generally from the time when Paul compared the self-denying conditions of the two services (2 Tim. iv. 3 ff.), is clear from his remark that, if soldiers put their profession and allegiance (*homologia*) above home and life itself, it were absurd for Christians to fail in loyalty to Him whose service promises rewards so much more to be desired (*id.* 39). So Tertullian, when denying that the Christian should seek the military decoration of a garland in Caesar's service, cries,[2] "Can we believe it allowable to add the oath of human service to the divine, and to pledge oneself to another lord after Christ?"

[1] So Tertullian *On Modesty*, ch. 8.
[2] *De Coronâ Militis*, c. 11.

II

Striking as is the brotherliness of early Jewish Christianity compared even with Judaism generally, especially as between rich and poor, yet here the advance was largely on pre-existing lines. Hence it is among non-Jews that we look for the full test of the Gospel's power to beget brotherly love in human nature. Did it succeed in diffusing an enthusiasm for humanity as such? For humanity was broken up into many sections, within which the tie of blood bound men together in such a way as to keep those in one racial division aloof from all the rest. The ultimate sanction too of such division lay in religion, as is the case in India to-day, where caste distinctions divide even those within the same national system, Hinduism. Indeed it is by keeping Indian caste in mind, that we can best measure the strength of the new moral factor, as able to abolish even such a wall of partition as that reared by race and circumcision between Jew and Gentile. But, apart from this, the barriers everywhere of race, religion, civilization, and culture, were such that a thoughtful observer like Celsus, writing towards the end of the second century after Christ, regarded it as chimerical to imagine that all the inhabitants of the earth should ever agree in obedience to one law of life.[1] Yet this is exactly the basis upon which Paul's missionary work actually achieved its large success. For him there was "in Christ" neither Jew nor Gentile, Greek nor barbarian, bond nor free; but only one divine-human type of humanity. And on the same principle did Christianity win over the Roman Empire.

[1] Origen, *Against Celsus*, viii. 72, cf. Harnack, *Expansion of Christianity*, i. 318 note.

The foundation of the new sense of brotherhood between *all* men without racial distinction was laid by the Gospel deep in the common spiritual nature of humanity as related to God. His fatherly relation to all excluded "respect of persons" on God's part, and therefore on man's.[1] The "offspring of God" must recognize each other under every guise, once the archetype of humanity had appeared, bringing to light in His own person the fact of man's capacity for sharing the Divine life as universally as the moral law at work in the conscience of all. In Jesus the Christ, God's destined Head of a humanity corresponding to the purpose of the Divine Grace, all barriers, even those raised by God Himself round His elect people for a limited and temporary purpose, were virtually done away for ever. With free and intimate access to God as Father, in and through Christ as the "Head of every man," came full fellowship between all who accepted their sonship and the moral conditions that involved. It was a great moment when this was finally and openly acknowledged even by Palestinian Christianity through the mouths of Peter and James. Thus the old caste custom which barred Jews from the special intimacy of table-fellowship with even the best and holiest of Gentiles, was now done away for the great bulk of Jewish Christians, on conditions that were mainly moral. The one remaining restriction as to food, that against partaking of "blood," was one about which many Gentiles felt some scruple. In any case, it is clear that these Jewish Christians gave up in sheer obedience to God and charity to their fellow-believers what nothing but a supreme moral motive would have induced them to surrender. Hence the Jerusalem Conference of Acts xv. marks one of the greatest

[1] Acts xvii. 23 ff., cf. x. 34 f.

triumphs in the moral history of humanity, and affords a proof of the mighty dynamic of the new Christian ideas.[1] And thanks to Paul's splendid devotion to the idea of the unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ, which he led his converts to embody in a great object-lesson, the tangible token of their grateful love to "the poor saints" of the mother-Church in Jerusalem (Rom. xv. 25 ff.), the Judaean Church as a whole never revoked its decision.

This palmary proof of the Gospel as the religion of the Spirit, with its inner law—a true attitude of soul towards God—in contrast to the religion of legal ordinances and outward rites, is typical of early Christianity. It recognized the supreme value of moral personality, as what gives a man his significance for God, and viewed the religious man's relations with God and his fellows as essentially ethical. Even worship itself became ethical, determining and determined by the worshipper's whole volitional life, and most of all his conduct towards men, seen in the light of divine destiny. Thus while in the old type of sacrificial service a man brought part of his possessions as homage to God, the Christian sacrifice was the man himself, soul and body, placed at the service of God for His own uses. It was a "living sacrifice," and no longer one of dead *things*; it was a "sacred service" (*liturgy*) informed and inspired by conscious personal ends.[2]

[1] As commentary, take the following modern analogy. Speaking of the immense difficulty of transcending caste feeling on the one side, and the sense of racial superiority on the other, between Hindus and English in India, a Brahmin lately said: "But where you meet a *real* Christian, the ideal is possible; and it is possible nowhere else in the world" (Paper on "Racial Unity," in *The Student Movement*, vol. x. p. 149).

[2] Rom. xii. 1, "your reasonable," or spiritual "service" (λογικὴ λατρεία).

The use which Paul makes of sacrificial language is always in this sense metaphorical, though for that very reason most spiritually real. "Sacrifice and solemn service," "an odour of a sweet smell (cf. Lev. i. 9), a sacrifice acceptable," "ministrant," "ministering in sacrifice," "offering"—all these are used by him[1] to describe the devotion of human life in one form or another to the sanctifying service of God, without any reference to formal acts of worship. The same is the case with the Hellenistic writer of the "Epistle to Hebrews," with his "sacrifice of praise to God continually" and his statement that with the "sacrifices" of doing good "God is well pleased" (xiii. 15 f.). Such language "passed gradually and almost imperceptibly into liturgical use, and hence acquired new shades of meaning," as the sacrificial associations of Old Testament and even pagan worship closed round it afresh. But in the New Testament itself the sphere of divine service (*latreia*) is not primarily public worship, but is rather the whole circle of conscious volition and action in which the transformed spirit may realize its new allegiance, not to the ways of the world or age, but to the will of God. This is seen in the illustrations which Paul goes on to give of the working of the mind of Christ in the collective life of His followers. It transcends the natural egoism whereby man appropriates to his own use or glory the gifts with which he finds himself endowed, whether by nature or grace. "In Christ" all gifts are felt to be held in trust for the good of all, in that fellowship which is the very life of the Christian Commonwealth, the Church of God. The idea of an organism of spiritual life, with Christ as head and Christians as

[1] Phil. ii. 17, iv. 18, Rom. xv. 16.

members one of another, should control all conduct among Christians (Rom. xii. 3 ff., 1 Cor. xii. 12 ff.).

Nor does Paul in this connexion distinguish between official and purely personal services or graces: preaching, teaching, ruling, relieving, showing hospitality, sympathizing in joy and sorrow, humility, forgiveness, abstinence from retaliation—are alike traced to the initiative of the selfsame indwelling Holy Spirit. Nothing is more characteristic of early Christianity[1] than its spiritualization of the whole of life in the light of this idea, coupled with that of Love, to God and man, as the chiefest gift of all, in and through which all others attain their end and perfection. Thus the common daily walk is no less "holy" than the more special acts of divine service or worship. It is this which makes it the absolute religion, as the Christian apologists of the second century feel and urge in various forms, notably Aristides and the author of the Epistle to Diognetus, who appeal to the *morale* of the Christians, who "in their lives surpass the laws," in proof of the divine origin of their faith. Such was the conception of holiness embodied once for all in the life of its Founder Himself and in the writings of its early prime, notably those of Paul. The Lordship of Christ for faith, as devoted loyalty to His person and will, covers everything and settles even ritual questions (Rom. xiv). "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let each man be fully assured in

[1] Striking proof of the persistence of the idea of Christian life as an inspired life, is furnished by the "Canons of Hippolytus," probably a late form given to his work entitled "Apostolic tradition touching spiritual gifts." There Hippolytus (about 200–220 A.D.), in spite of his opposition to Montanist exaggerations, treats the distinctive Christian graces of character as gifts of the Spirit.

his own mind." He is to do or abstain as "unto the Lord"; yet not in any individualistic spirit, but as in love to his brother's soul also, avoiding as far as possible what might cause him to stumble or act with a bad conscience. "Whatsoever is not of faith (i.e. conviction as to the Lord's approval) is sin." There we have the sum and substance of Christian ethics on the Godward side; and on the manward side, the principle is equally simple and inclusive, Whatsoever is not of love is sin (Rom. xiii. 8–10, xiv. 15, 1 Cor. xiii). The power, range, flexibility yet stringency, of these motives are infinite, as Paul shows in the varied applications he makes of them in his different epistles. "Faith energizing by love" constitutes a perfect religion of the spirit, as distinct from the letter. The correlative of this is the Spirit of God, as a spirit of holiness and love, abidingly at work in the soul of him who has sincerely said in his heart, "Jesus is Lord" (1 Cor. xii. 3; Gal. v. 13–16, 22–25).

Hitherto we have described Gentile Christian ethics mainly as set forth by Paul in the Epistle to the Romans, which is specially adapted for our purpose as being a summary of his experience of Christian life without that more special reference to local conditions in one or another of his young communities which marks the bulk of his Epistles.[1] But there is one other Pauline epistle which is similarly general in scope and serves to supplement the picture in

[1] E.g., those to Thessalonica, where he has occasion to emphasize the duty of patient, honest work for one's own daily bread, and to Corinth, where love as the organic principle of Christian society is variously used to counteract the Greek egoism and intellectualism. What is most impressive in all cases is Paul's confidence that the inward dynamic of the Gospel is adequate to overcome all abuses, in spite even of misunderstanding.

Romans by certain other applications, particularly as regards the Christian home and household. The Epistle known as that " to the Ephesians," but really a circular letter to Churches in the Roman province of Asia, with Ephesus as its centre, is wonderfully rich in its domestic ethics, the sphere where we enter the very holy of holies of the Christian life[1] and the unit of its social reform. The sanctity of the Christian home rests upon its nobler idea of woman and her possibilities as man's equal, though not his duplicate, in all that constitutes true humanity. Man and woman " in Christ," as joint-sharers in the Divine life, are fellow-helpers in all that belongs to this supreme vocation, and together constitute a partnership so full and intimate as to supply the type of the union of Christ and His Church (Eph. v. 22–33). This idea placed conjugal love on a new basis of mutual reverence which contained the promise and potency of a new type of conjugal life altogether. Yet here too the natural truth in the old doctrine and practice is conserved while transfigured. The headship of the man and the subordination of the woman, as the more dependent sex, is taken for granted ; but all is animated by the new reverence and love. It is " in the fear of Christ " that each gives way to the other, and this transforms everything. The relation of Christ to the Church becomes the model of the husband's spirit towards his wife in all things ; and the wife's attitude is typified by that of the Church to Christ. All selfishness is thereby eliminated from their relations. The husband's headship is no longer arbitrary, over-bearing, unsympathetic or patronizing ;

[1] The new attitude to women and children is touched on with much insight in T. R. Glover's *Dale Lectures*, where it is contrasted with that of even the best pagan moralists.

wife gains a fresh dignity in his eyes and in her own, passes out of mere pupillage under his will and enters on an intelligent co-operation in the vocation of applying a higher will than that of either, as embodied in their Lord's life and teaching. The frivolity of female life in antiquity, conditioned by the triviality of its occupations and interests, is remedied at its source.

Thus the foundation is laid for the Christian home. The children are no longer in theory and practice chattels of the *paterfamilias*, but God's divinest trusts to both parents, to be viewed from birth as His, and to be trained to realize their vocation as members of Christ. "Holy," as born of parents holy unto the Lord by the covenant (1 Cor. vii. 14), they were to be treated as themselves of "the household of the faith" and not of the world. Thus they are exhorted to obey their parents "in the Lord," i.e. as being Christians and from Christian motives; while parents are to nurture them with instruction and admonishing of a like order (vi. 1, 4). Very significant of the new spirit of consideration is the warning to fathers not to provoke their children, by harsh or unreasonable commands, "lest they lose heart" (*ib.* 4, Col. iii. 21)—a fine touch which has not yet had its full effect. Similarly the lot of domestics, mostly slaves, felt at once the breath of the Divine philanthropy (Titus iii. 4), which forthwith brought inward freedom to the spirit and thereby transfigured the outward lot, even where full emancipation did not follow, as it did doubtless in many cases. Though Paul felt it inexpedient to declare war against slavery in general, partly because this would have brought his message to a violent end as subversive of social order, and partly because he regarded the existing

order as having a very short lease of life, the whole tendency of his emphasis upon the common lordship of Christ, for master and slave alike, must have made strongly against slavery among Christians (Eph. vi. 9, Col. iv. 1; and esp. Philemon *passim*). Later on we have clear evidence that this took effect in Christian practice.[1]

Beyond these special applications, however, we find also in Ephesians, and its companion Colossians, striking use made of the essential Christian spirit as the purifier and sweetener of social intercourse generally. The following quotations[2] show how the silent revolution wrought by a new idea of God and man worked itself out, just as it does on the mission-field to-day.

"No longer walk even as the heathen walk, without true moral aim, alienated from the Divine life through insensibility of conscience, and so running into all sorts of excess. But ye did not so learn Christ, if ye were duly taught truth as it is in Jesus, namely, to put off the ways of your old moral character, and assume the new character made after God's image. So be truthful with each other; for we are members one of another. Let anger not grow into sin, as abiding resentment. Let him that stole steal no more; rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need.[3] Let no corrupt talk escape you, but such as builds up noble manhood, remembering the Holy Spirit that dwells within. Hence, let all bitterness and angry railing and malice be put away; and put on, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, long-suffer-

[1] For some account of the effects of early Christianity upon the condition of women, children, and slaves, see C. Schmidt, *The Social Results of Early Christianity* (recently re-issued by Pitman & Sons). Perhaps the most striking evidence, however, is the habitual tone of the epitaphs found in the Catacombs.

[2] Eph. iv. 17–v. 21, Col. iii. 5–17, both passages being used and slightly paraphrased.

[3] This motive for industry is characteristic of early Christianity; see below.

ing ; forbearing one another and forgiving, if any one have complaint against any. Even as God in Christ graciously forgave you, so also do ye. Be ye, therefore, imitators of God, as beloved children ; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice of sweet savour to God. To one living in this consecrated spirit sin alike of the flesh and of the spirit, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, ' which is idolatry,' are utterly alien. With such ' unfruitful works of darkness ' have nothing in common, but rather even reprove them by contrast, as children of light. Look then carefully how ye walk, wisely making the best of the present season ; for the times are evil. Avoid such exhilaration of the senses as men seek in wine, with its riot ; seek instead exaltation from the Divine Spirit, such as overflows in holy speech for the common good ; teaching and admonishing yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with gratitude of heart unto the Lord. Finally, whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

Here one gains two complementary impressions [1] ; first, that the Christian life is simply the true human life, realizing the normal relations which should subsist among mankind ; and next, that all these relations of life, as baptized into Christ, become parts and modes of Church fellowship, animated and sustained by the sense of a special bond, Divine as well as human, which invests even " the daily round and common task " with a heavenly dignity and sanctity.

With the above characterization of Christian life we have reason to believe that the actual practice of the early Christian brotherhoods corresponded in the main.[2] No doubt there were exceptions, due partly to inexperience of " truth as it is in Jesus," as distinct from current moral standards, and partly to erroneous

[1] Compare Hort, *Christian Ecclesia*, 228 ff.

[2] This is the general result of the full and dispassionate consideration given to the point not only in the Apostolic Age, but down to the close of the next century, in E. von Dobschütz's *Christian Life in the Primitive Church*, 1904 (Williams & Norgate).

theories which arose in certain circles as to the relation of "the flesh" to "the Spirit" in the Christian walk, tending on the one hand to antinomianism and on the other to false asceticism. But these were probably passing aberrations for the most part, corrected by further teaching or by the discipline of temporary exclusion[1] from the full local "fellowship of the Saints." "Reprove one another," says the *Didaché* (xv. 3), "not in wrath but in peace, as ye have it in the Gospel (cf. Matt. xviii. 15–17); and with any that trangresseth against his fellow let none talk, nor let him hear speech from you until he repent."

Discipline was corporate both in spirit and in form, and must have had immense moral authority, seeing that half the joy and strength of the new life lay in its loving fellowship. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace" (Gal. v. 22); and it was on the occasions of outward "fellowship of the Spirit" afforded by the *Agapé*, or Love-Feast, that the Kingdom of God was most manifestly felt as peace and inspired joy (Rom. xiv. 17). Then was love realized to the full as "the bond of perfectness," and "the peace of Christ" swayed all hearts as the arbiter of divergent individual interests (Col. iii. 14 ff.), as they held high fellowship in the Spirit, with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. The most vivid account we possess of a Love-feast comes from as late as the very end of the second century[2]: yet we may safely carry it back to any of the intervening decades.

To such Christian fellowship how fatal all that divided in spirit those who sat side by side at the sacred social board! To gather in the spirit of faction

[1] 2 Thess. iii. 14 f., cf. 1 Thess. v. 14 f., Gal. vi. 1–5, 7 f., 2 Cor. ii. 5–11.

[2] Tertullian, *Apology*, ch. 39.

or with enmity lurking among the members, would be to "come together not for the better but for the worse" (1 Cor. xi. 17): it would be "impossible to eat a Lord's supper" in deed and truth. Accordingly everything was done to safeguard the feast of Holy Communion from profanation by loveless participation. It opened with a symbol of mutual affection, the kiss of peace, accompanied doubtless by some fitting words of reminder as to its significance and sanctity; and how seriously the duty of making the inward state answer to the outward symbolism of the breaking of one loaf and the drinking together from the same cup, is shown by *Didaché* chapter xiv. "On the Lord's Day gathering yourselves together break bread and give thanks, having first confessed your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure.[1] But let no one that hath a dispute with his fellow assemble with you until they be reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be profaned. For this is that which was spoken by the Lord (Mal. i. 11): In every place and time offer me a pure sacrifice." Here we have a deeply ethical idea of the Christian sacrifice, of which the Eucharistic prayer was the most solemn form; its purity, and so its virtue, was forfeited by unforgiven sin on the conscience, and particularly by the sin of unbrotherly feeling, in violation of the fundamental Christian law of Love. As long as the Eucharist was so regarded, so long the Christian life had at the very heart of its corporate worship the most powerful of sanctions for the safeguarding of its distinctive ethical and social ideal. Thus while Baptism, as we have seen, made impressive the conception of the Christian life as loyalty to a covenant

[1] Cf. iv. 14, "Thou shalt confess thy transgressions, and shalt not come to prayer with a bad conscience."

solemnly sealed and attested—a covenant implicitly or explicitly renewed from week to week; recurring Eucharistic communion with fellow-members, as also with the Head of the Body, served to refresh the life of Love as the very life of God within the soul, and to brace it for every call to self-sacrifice and service. In proportion as these twin conceptions ceased to be uppermost, the rites themselves lost their moral and social value.

It was realization of this, namely, that Love was the essence of Christian life and worship, and that it found expression and nourishment in the *Agapé* or Eucharist of the united local brotherhood, which made Ignatius of Antioch, early in the second century, so vehement against heresy as fatal to unity and love. Hence his insistence on fellowship with the corporate life of the local Church under its duly recognized ministry, the congregational bishop and the body of elders and deacons amidst whom he presided, as the outward safeguard of unity. Thus he cries :[1]

"He that is within the place of sacrifice (the Church as a praying[2] people) is pure; but he that is outside the place of sacrifice is not pure; that is, he that doeth aught (in a Church capacity) apart from bishop and eldership and deacons, this man is not pure in his conscience. . . . Do ye, therefore, arm yourselves with meekness (in contrast to the self-confidence of sectaries) and so recover full health in faith, which is the flesh of the Lord, and in love, which is the blood of Jesus Christ. Let none of you bear a grudge against his neighbour."

Here in Ignatius' mystical language, as Lightfoot says, faith is the flesh, the substance of the Christian life; love is the blood, the energy coursing through its veins.

This sacrificial language is of the type already

[1] *To the Trallians*, vii., viii.; compare *To the Ephesians*, v.

[2] So Polycarp, *To the Philippians*, iv., calls widows, as specially devoted to the life of prayer, "an altar of God."

seen in Paul and in the Epistle to Hebrews. The people are the place of sacrifice (altar), as their prayers of thanksgiving (Eucharist) are also the sacrifice proper, "the sacrifice of praise . . ., that is, the fruit of lips that make acknowledgment to His name" (Heb. xiii. 15). Their sacrifices are simple thankofferings and not expiatory in intention, the homage of those already brought nigh by Christ's one sacrifice, and thereby made priests unto God for to offer sacrifices well-pleasing to Him.[1] And as in Hebrews such sacrifices were deeds[2] of beneficence and charity (*v.* 16), so the "pure sacrifice" of the heart in praise assumed the outward form of thankofferings for God's service, especially in the cause of the poor. By Clement of Rome (c. 96 A.D.) they are referred to as "the gifts" offered to God (ch. xliv, and Lightfoot's note). The uses to which these free-will offerings were put, beyond the portion of them used for the Eucharistic bread and wine proper, are indicated by Justin Martyr (1 *Apol.* 67) as being the succour of orphans and widows, those in want through sickness or other cause, those in prison, strangers, and in short all that are in need.[3] A century or so later the Christian who is tempted to spend his money in gambling,[4]

[1] Compare the Rabbinic saying, "One day all offerings will cease, only the Thankoffering will not cease; all prayers will cease, only the Thanksgiving prayer will not cease" (quoted by Westcott on Heb. xiii. 15).

[2] As God's name is "glorified among the Gentiles," by sacrifices of charity, according to Mal. i. 11, 14, as cited in *Did.* xiv. 3, so conversely God's name is blasphemed among the heathen through an unloving walk (Polycarp *ad Phil.*, x. 2 f.).

[3] In course of time the support of the ministry, which at first was a matter of direct gift by the donor to the recipient (*Didaché*, xiii. 2–7, cf. xv. 2), came to be a charge on the collective offerings.

[4] *De Aleatoribus*, xi, which deals earnestly with this social evil.

is bidden " Scatter thy money upon the Lord's table." Indeed the first privilege belonging to the baptized Christian is that he is now " made worthy to present an offering " in the Eucharistic service,[1] and it is forbidden that any should thus contribute to the Christian sacrifice until fully admitted by baptism to God's priestly people. To grasp this early idea of the Christian sacrifice, is to realize that no act of public worship is more sacred or characteristic of our religion than the offertory, especially the " sacramental offertory " for the needy members of the Church, if only we enter into its original spirit. It expresses not only the brotherly love which is the manward aspect of our religion, but also the fact that the Christian holds no property his own, but only as in trust for God, the giver of all, at His disposal for His own uses. Thus the Communion Service was, and should ever be, a fountain-head of Christian altruism, and of devotion to the service of God in man.

That this has not been the case to a far greater degree in the history of Christianity as a whole, is partly due to the changes both in idea and practice which from the third century onwards transformed the primitive social feast of love (*agapê*) and thanksgiving (*eucharistia*) into the Catholic mystery of the Mass. Apart altogether from the truth or falsity of the new conceptions of a bodily presence of Christ in the elements, the mind of the partaker had a new preoccupation, as he brooded upon the mystery of such a form of communion with his Lord; and the whole emphasis of thought and feeling shifted from the personal relations of fidelity to God and man which constituted the normal Christian life, and tended to rest on a divine

[1] *Didascalia* (c. 250–275). So in iv. 5–6, only the gifts of those walking worthily are to be accepted.

opus operatum unrelated to Christian experience. Thus the connexion of the Service with conduct and motive became more indirect; and at the same time the idea of grace therein conveyed became more individualistic. Concurrently with this, the deeply ethical idea of the Christian's sacrifice, in and though his "gifts" brought to the altar of God's service, was gradually transferred to the eucharistic symbols of Christ's passion as consecrated by the minister (hence growingly styled "priest") in sacred formulae; so that, in the elements, the body and blood of Christ themselves were conceived to be offered as a sacrifice of expiation, the counterpart and continuation of Christ's own oblation in Heaven. Nay more, by a further confusion, which we can trace in the West at least, an expiatory value came to be transferred back to the Christian's own oblations, and the ideal of salvation became once more at its very heart both legal and precarious.

While the primitive Communion Service and its prayers were a positive inspiration to loyal love and unselfish living, both it and the conduct which it fostered were safeguarded in more negative fashion by a discipline which brought the full force of the Church's public opinion to bear upon serious breaches of the Christian ideal. Indeed so closely were the two related, that the final form of such discipline was exclusion for a season from the Church's supreme act of fellowship. But what here most needs emphasis is the genuinely collective character of such discipline [1]

[1] Tertullian, *Apology*, chap. 39, describes how the Christians meet to enforce discipline according to the Gospel's precepts. Then take place "exhortations, corrections and divine censures. For both judgment has great weight as being delivered among those assured that God is looking on, and the strongest presumption is created as to what the award in the future will be, whenever any has

during the whole period that has any claim to be called primitive. Each case came before the assembled brotherhood, and the censure expressed the moral *communis sensus* of "the saints," in whom the mind of Christ was believed to operate through the Holy Spirit. Could any moral sanction be more impressive and potent for the Christian conscience? And could it fail to lose much of its distinctive force, as rooted in the whole genius of Christ's teaching on mutual responsibility among His disciples, as well as in the actual usage implied in Matthew xviii. 15-20, just in proportion as the duty of watching over each other's souls became deputed in form and in fact to the officers of the community? None can say, indeed, how much transformation of the very principles underlying Christian practice, both personal and social, and how much arrest in the education of the average Christian consciousness in what is most proper to it, may be put down to such withdrawal of collective moral responsibility from the rank and file of Christians. But none can doubt that the effect has been great; while few intelligent Protestants will question that it has been on the whole an evil.

So far we have considered early Christian life chiefly as taking effect among Christians themselves, rather than society in general. But there was more than this. "As we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of faith" (Gal. vi. 10). The latter reference naturally prevails, particularly at first; yet, as occasion offers, Christian

so sinned as to be banished communion in prayer and assembly and all sacred intercourse. Tried seniors preside, having obtained that honour not by money but by general testimony." So too the Syrian *Didascalia*, ii. 47, more than half a century later.

writings breathe a large dutifulness to " them that are outside." The primary duty towards such was, of course, to win them over by " holding forth the message of life," as mirrored in a Christlike walk. All needless offence to their feelings or sense of right and wrong was studiously to be avoided (Rom. xii. 17 f.). The only form of revenge allowable towards foes and persecutors was to cause in them a burning sense of shame by patient rendering of good for evil. The only kind of resistance even to official persecution was to be passive ; for in idea civil authority is ordained of God for the good of men, in the long run, and the terror of evil-doers. The actual authorities might be misguided or misinformed as to matters of conscience, which go beyond their ken and therefore their strict competence : and in that case conscience must be obeyed, God rather than man, by passive resistance to the usurping action of the State. But where conscience is not directly involved, civic dues of all kinds are to be rendered. Every human duty is to be discharged by the Christian as by others, save that with him, one, the supreme debt of love, cannot be paid off, but remains ever in force. " Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself " holds in relation to all men, according to their state of need and receptivity.[1] " Let us not be found men-pleasers," cries an early preacher (2 *Clement,* ix), but at once adds, " Not that we are to please one another only, but also the men that are without, as far as righteousness goes ; that the Name (of Christ) be not reviled by reason of us." Similarly the *Epistle to Diognetus,* an " open letter " to cultured pagans which must have missed its aim had it not kept pretty close to obvious facts, claims for Christians that " they love all men, and are persecuted by all. . . .

[1] The above summarizes Rom. xii. 19–xiii. 10.

They are reviled, and they bless; they are insulted and they respect. . . . In a word, what the soul is in a body, this the Christians are in the world. . . So great is the office for which God hath appointed them, and which it is not lawful for them to decline."

Thus once more we are brought back to love as the keystone of the whole fabric of Christian conduct, without which it collapses the more surely that the strain of its ideal on obedience is so enormous. It is no wonder that the very idea of Love in the Christian sense is other than what it was prior to Christ. Not that maxims of love, more or less universal, were lacking both in Judaism and outside. But they were largely isolated and incidental; or were not meant in the same serious sense which Christianity attaches to them, because they were not backed by a spirit of real enthusiasm for humanity. Thus love was not before made the root of all other virtues, or insisted upon as the test of true fellowship with God; nor could it be, until the idea of God as Himself Love was fully and effectively revealed in Christ. Then, "Ye shall be perfect (in love) as your heavenly Father is perfect," supplied the needful religious dynamic for the supreme moral disposition, that "ardent, passionate, or devoted state of mind" declared by Jesus to be "the root of virtue."[1] This "expulsive power of a new affection" proved itself in fact the root principle of Christian ethics. Of this fact the First Epistle of John affords impressive evidence; for its message is that sin and Christian love are in experience mutually exclusive; and that faith in the love of God made manifest in Christ means victory over the world and all its forces. And what this Epistle witnesses of Chris-

[1] *Ecce Homo*, a book which abounds in noble passages bearing upon the subject of this essay.

tian experience at the end of the second generation, that the literature [1] of the second and third centuries abundantly confirms. Christian love, too, was no mere chance emotion of individual sympathy : it was universal in its scope, because rooted in profound reverence for the human soul as related to God. The revolutionary effect of this conception may be illustrated by contrasting Aristotle's ideal man, the "lofty-minded" person of consciously superior gifts and character, with Goethe's description of the truly great soul, in which dwells a threefold reverence—for that above himself, that on his own level, and that as yet below his own condition.

To the foregoing picture of early Christian life it may be objected, that it is unreal because one-sided, only the better features being selected for notice. This objection would be justified if a complete picture were in question. But such is not the case. Space and the special scope of the series of essays of which this forms part, alike imposed the necessity of selection in order to place in relief those features which seem really to explain the marvellous effect produced by Christianity in the Roman Empire. Ere three centuries were over, the religion which had at first seemed the foe of social order was recognized by Constantine, one of the ablest of the world's statesmen, as the one possible basis of that Empire both morally and socially. This means that the Church's best and most distinctive features had been most operative, in spite of enormous hindrances and opposition from the hitherto dominant forces in society, in spite also of all the

[1] Pagan as well as Christian ; compare Lucian's contemptuous, "How the Christians do love one another."

moral shortcomings of those who owned the new inspiration and its ideals. So viewed, the evidence of moral failure among early Christians generally, amounts to no more than what may serve to remind us to-day of the terrible power of evil tradition and custom in ancient society, and of the grim reality of the struggle for a purer life as carried on by the new society in an atmosphere charged with moral malaria.

Take, for instance, the *Shepherd* of Hermas and the earliest extant homily, called the "Second Epistle of Clement," two writings reflecting the ravages wrought within the Christian fold by the worldly spirit rife in two great cities (Rome and another, probably Alexandria) about 120–150 A.D. The homily shows especially how the Greek theory as to the moral independence of the spiritual and physical elements in man afforded a subtle excuse for yielding to sins of the flesh, as though the spirit suffered nothing thereby either here or hereafter. But it shows also how strong was the reaction against such conduct on the part of the local Church as a whole; so much so, that the homily itself was treasured among its archives for occasional reading, and ultimately attained semi-canonical rank. Hermas, on his part, illustrates the subtle temptations of wealth, and how surely the Master himself had diagnosed its tendency to sap the vitality of spiritual simplicity and earnestness, on which the realization of the Christian ideal depends, and to foster the spirit of compromise even with the ways of an alien society. But he shows too, how the Christian consciousness was reacting afresh against such dangers and resisting Mr. Facing-both-ways, with his objection, "The Christian ideal may be glorious, but is it practicable?" Hermas points to the innerness of the Christian ideal; to its stress on the master-motive; to the enthusiastic

love of the good in singleness of heart, as the great antidote to "evil desire" in every form; to faith as the mother of the virtues; and to the Holy Spirit of God, striving in the soul against the desires of the flesh, as the ground of a joyous assurance of victory.[1] Here we have true evangelic notes, though side by side with them there are traces of a revived doctrine of supererogation,—token of a legalist mode of thought,—in the notion that certain parts of the Christian ideal, e.g. self-denial for the sake of the widow and orphan, constitute a special "sacrifice" to God not incumbent on followers of Christ as such.[2] Here, indeed, was a menace to the Christian life, the doctrine of two standards of obedience among Christians, one which for various reasons, more or less plausible, spread quickly in certain circles during the third century, to the lowering of Christian conduct, personal and social. But on the whole, the *Shepherd*—which also hovered for a century or two on the borders of the Christian Canon—tends, like the kindred homily, not to disprove the adequacy of the new moral dynamic at work among men, but rather to heighten our sense of the terrible reality and potency of the counter-current against which Christians were making sure, if often painful headway.

After all, what is of most significance both historically and practically, is to gain some fair impression of the moral forces prevalent within early Christianity, their religious springs and social issues. This is what it is hoped may have been rendered possible by the above sketch. Nor does it seem that our modern world affords a field of operation less suitable

[1] *Mandates*, xii. 1–2, *Visions*, iii. 8, 3 ff., *Similitudes* ix. 13, 2; 24, 2; x. 3.

[2] Contrast Christ's teaching, *Ecce Homo* (1867), p. 299.

for the development of the latent possibilities of the distinctive Christian motives and principles here set forth, than was the ancient world. On the contrary Christendom at any rate is in a state of inherited semi-preparedness [1] such as presents an opportunity of infinite possibilities, if only the essential Gospel of Love, divine and human, and of love's sacrifice for the realization of human good as it was to the eyes of Christ, be proclaimed afresh in all its spiritual simplicity but far-reaching practical application, according to the special needs of the age. To see society as through the eyes of Jesus Christ,—that the social effects of Methodism in one century, and of the Salvation Army in the next, show to be the secret of adequate moral dynamic, through a baptism into His spirit, as " enthusiasm of humanity " for every human being as before God.

The practical corollary of such reverence for all human capacity as of God and unto God, is not only redemptive pity but economic justice. This demands in God's name both steady effort and sacrifice, in order to secure the greatest possible equality of opportunity for all. To rest short of this, or to plead " inherent rights of property," is to rob God, by denying His ownership of all wealth and the means of its production, including human faculty, and by refusing Him free use of what is necessary to His own development of His real treasure,

[1] Compare the general effect of Mr. Benjamin Kidd's writings as to the sensitiveness of the modern social conscience. Further, if, as he argues in his " Romanes Lecture," the condition of society's becoming more organic be subordination of the individual to the common good, and of the present to the future; then Christianity, especially early Christianity, has proved itself pre-eminently able to effect this. For it can create the social will needful to a fully social State.

latent human capacity, for want of fitting conditions. "No rights apart from correlative duties," that is more and more plainly dawning on men as the fundamental law of society, historically and ethically regarded. But if this is to be embodied also in law, without either bloodshed or loss to personal and individual development, the spirit of willing self-sacrifice, where one's superfluity means loss to others, must be diffused and maintained as never before throughout the body politic. For this we need the Christian consciousness of God, as the Creator of all things, without and within a man, and so as Sovereign Disposer of all the issues of man's dependent productivity. But as this consciousness came to Christendom through the experience of God's grace and man's dependence in the matter of the soul's salvation in Christ from sin and all its disabling effects, so must it be spread and sustained by the same experience. Thus doubly shall men learn to say, "What have we that we have not received?" and with double reverence to use all their powers and goods as in trust from God for His end of ends, His Kingdom of holy Love among men. Such at least is the moral of early Christian life and institutions.

V

The Factors in the Expansion of the Christian Church

By Rev. JAMES ORR, M.A., D.D., Professor of Apologetics and Sytematic Theology in the United Free Church College, Glasgow.

ARGUMENT.

The Problem of the Extension of Christianity—The Growing Complexity and Difficulty.

I. Was the Early Progress of Christianity Surprising and Unprecedented? —The Parallel with other Religions not Real—Buddhism not a "Universal Religion"—The World-Conquering Principle of Christianity —The Remarkable Reception of the Gospel everywhere—Gentile Christianity not exclusively identical with Paulinism—The Period of Greatest Expansion—The Estimates of Modern Scholars—The Pervasion of all Ranks and Classes of Society—The Evidence of a Learned and Eloquent Christian Apology—The Secret Influence of Christianity.

II. The Causes or Factors of the Expansion and Influence.

(1) Can Conditions in the Pagan World itself Explain this Success? —The Peculiar Preparation for the Reception of a Universal Religion —The External Aspects of the Preparation—The Profounder and far more Positive Lines of Preparation—The Strain to Universalism.

(2) These conditions do not explain the Progress of Christianity —Baur's Error—The Failure of the Philosophies—The Moral Corruption Prevalent—The Ethical Revival of the Age of the Antonines produced no great Change—The Main Counts in the Indictment stand.

(3) The Bearing of the Religious Conditions on the Acceptance of the Gospel, the Wide Spread of Scepticism and the Vast Growth of Superstition—The Help and the Hindrance to Christianity.

III. The Explanation to be sought within the Religion itself—The Deeper Necessity of the Age Met—The Real core of the Religion not Spirituality, nor Monotheism, nor Doctrine of Immortality. Conversions due to Christian Life and Witness—The Real Spring in the Doctrine of the Cross—The Christian Faith in the Risen and Exalted Lord—The Absoluteness of Christ's Person and Work—The Gift of the Holy Spirit—The Moral Changes wrought by the Spirit of Christianity: a New Spirit of Active Charity, a New Ideal of Moral Purity, Purification of the Family Life, the Elevation of Women, the Amelioration of the condition of the Slave, the Consecration of Labour—The Firm Organization of the Christian Church—Not a New Gospel needed but a Gospel better understood.

V

The Factors in the Expansion of the Christian Church

By Rev. JAMES ORR, M.A., D.D., Professor of Apologetics and Systematic Theology in the United Free Church College, Glasgow.

The extension of Christianity in the early centuries presents problems which grow in fascination with increase of knowledge and closer attention to the facts. Till the school of Baur opened the way to a broader investigation, the subject was mainly discussed as a branch of apologetics. The early apologists not unnaturally dwelt on the surprising rapidity of the spread of their religion as a proof of the divine energy inherent in it.[1] Every one has heard of Gibbon's "five secondary causes" of the rapid growth of Christianity, and of the refutations of the sufficiency of these by Bishop Watson and others.[2] Since Baur's time the standpoint and method of treatment have largely changed. Learning and research have enor-

[1] The passages are given at length in Harnack's *Expansion of Christianity*, vol. ii. (E. T.), pp. 147–82.

[2] Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, chap. xv.: in reply Watson's *Apology for Christianity*, etc. Gibbon veils his purpose by naming as the primary causes, "The convincing evidence of the doctrine itself," and "the ruling providence of its great Author." But, of course, the so-called "secondary causes" are to him the real ones.

mously increased our knowledge of that ancient world into which Christianity entered. The political, social, moral, and religious conditions of the Graeco-Roman world, the interacting forces at work in it, philosophic tendencies, imperial policy and its effects, have been minutely and carefully studied. New worlds have been opened up by exploration of antiquity, and immense extensions have taken place in our acquaintance with Oriental religions. The Christian Origins themselves have been made the subject of exhaustive critical inquiry.

Under these various influences, the problem of the causes of the early progress of Christianity has become vastly more complex and difficult. The change is seen in such works as Harnack's, where a good part of the success of Christianity is attributed to the power of Christ's religion to "absorb the elements of the ancient world into itself"; [1] or as Otto Pfleiderer's, where, in the fashion of Baur, Christianity is "studied as the normal outcome of the manifold factors in the religious and ethical life of the time." [2] The study of the progress of Christianity, in other words, from being apologetic, has become scientific. If the inquiry is rightly conducted, we are satisfied that apology does not suffer from the process. More

[1] In an article in *The Contemporary Review* for August 1886, p. 234, Harnack speaks of "The Catholic Church as that form of Christianity in which every element of the ancient world has been successively assimilated which Christianity could in any way take up into itself without utterly losing itself in the world. . . . Christianity has throughout sucked the marrow of the ancient world, and assimilated it." This is not put so strongly in his latest work, but cf. i. pp. 291 ff., 395; ii, pp. 327 ff., 341 ff., 349 ff., 417 ff., 437 ff., 441 ff.

[2] Introduction to his *Primitive Christianity: its Writings and Teachings in their Historical Connexions;* cf. his *Christian Origins.*

important even than apologetic gain are the lessons to be gleaned from the study for our own tasks in advancing the Kingdom of God in the world.

I

A preliminary question relates to the fact itself to be investigated. How far are we entitled to speak of the early progress of Christianity as something surprising and unprecedented, needing special causes to explain it? Does not the history of religions, outside Christianity, afford examples of like vigour and rapidity of diffusion? There is Judaism, which, notwithstanding its exclusive spirit and repellent customs, had, through the zeal of its propaganda, gained an astonishing hold upon the Gentile world.[1] Harnack computes the numbers of the Jews in the time of Augustus at about a seventh or eighth part of the whole population of the Roman Empire.[2] There are the Egyptian, Persian, and other foreign cults, with their mysteries, which flooded the Empire in the early centuries: so much so that Harnack declares that in the third century the worship of Mithra "became the most powerful rival of Christianity."[3] There is the extraordinarily rapid extension of the Mohammedan Empire, which, in less than a century after the Hegira, had spread through Arabia, Syria and Egypt, far into the interior of Africa, and in Europe embraced Spain and part of Gaul. Above all, there is Buddhism, which, driven from India,

[1] Cf. Matt. xxiii. 15; Acts xv. 21.

[2] *Expansion*, I. pp. 10 ff. He takes the population of the Empire to be 54,000,000, or 60,000,000. This, however, is probably an underestimate. V. Schultze computes 100,000,000 for the whole empire; Gibbon, 120,000,000.

[3] *History of Dogma*, i. p. 118 (E. T.).

took possession of China, Japan, and neighbouring countries, and continues to reckon its adherents by hundreds of millions. With Christianity, Islam and Buddhism are ranked by investigators as "universal religions"; [1] and it may be claimed that the diffusion of the latter faith is as wonderful as anything in the history of the religion of the Cross.

Yet, more closely viewed, the parallel between the spread of the religions named and that of Christianity in the first flush of its conquering vigour is seen not to be a real one. Judaism cannot fairly be put in comparison with Christianity, since, apart from other reasons (the majority of the Jews in the Empire were no doubt Jews by birth and descent), Christianity was itself an outgrowth from Judaism, accepted its revelation and Scriptures, and proclaimed, so far, the same truths, appealing to the Old Testament prophecies, and declaring itself to be their fulfilment. Besides, the religion of Moses never gained possession of the Empire as Christianity did, or came within imaginable distance of such a consummation. Mithraism, again, was a transient phenomenon, appealing to a special class and a passing spasm of feeling, and could not, as Harnack shows in his latest interesting discussion, possibly "gain the day." [2] In its austere

[1] Cf. Kuenen's Hibbert Lectures (1882) on *National Religions and Universal Religions*, pp. 5 ff. Kuenen gives to Mohammedanism "according to one of the latest estimates, 175,000,000, against Christendom's 400,000,000, and Buddhism's 450,000,000."

[2] *Expansion*, ii. pp. 447–51. Harnack, in his Appendix, after studying *Cumont's* work on the Mysteries of Mithra, appears to have considerably modified his earlier verdict. He shows that the entire domain of Hellenism was closed to Mithraism, that in the West it was chiefly a military cult, and that it was not, after all, a real rival to Christianity throughout the West. The resemblances to Christian sacraments are "superficial." Cf. Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, pp. 619 ff.

monotheism, Mohammedanism had a truth superior to that of the idolatries around it, and was capable of inspiring a fierce, fanatical zeal; but, even with this truth, despite Carlyle's dictum in his *Heroes*, the religion of Mohammed made little headway till the prophet took to the sword as a means of propagating his faith. "I affirm," says Dr. Marcus Dods truly, "that the man must shut his eyes to the broadest, most conspicuous facts of the history of Islam, who denies that the sword has been the great means of propagating this religion."[1] In no sense is Mohammedanism fitted to be a universal religion. Palgrave somewhere tells of a boast of Mohammed that he would make his religion spread wherever the palm-tree grew. This, in fact, is nearly the limit of its progress. Where it touches higher civilization, it acts as a blight and curse.[2] Where it holds possession of lower races, it presents an almost insuperable obstacle to the entrance of higher conceptions.[3]

Buddhism stands on an altogether different level. It would be unjust to deny the elevation of much of Buddha's ethical teaching, and still more the mild and benevolent spirit which breathes through the teaching from the personality of Buddha himself. Yet it is only by an illusion that we can speak of Buddhism as a "universal" religion, or of Buddha's original doctrine as a religion at all. It would be

[1] *Mohammed, Buddha and Christ*, p. 99.

[2] One of the best books on this aspect of Mohammedanism is Freeman's *Ottoman Power in Europe*. Cf. especially chap. iii., which discusses the general character of the religion.

[3] In his *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, Mr. R. Bosworth Smith defended the view, which has been taken by others, that Mohammedanism has special adaptation to low and unprogressive races. He subsequently considerably modified this view in an article in *The Nineteenth Century*, Dec. 1887.

more proper to describe it as a pessimism, on a basis of Brahmanistic metaphysics. In any case, its way of salvation—its method of attaining Nirvana—is possible only for the *élite*—for the fewest of the few. For the many there is the simple code of the five precepts, but without any effective moral motive behind to secure fulfilment. In practice, therefore, Buddhism has not proved a spring of progress. It does not displace rival systems, but subsists peacefully alongside of them, or amalgamates with them. Thus with Confucianism and Taoism in China ; thus with Shintoism in Japan. Its later fantastic developments are an abandonment of Buddha's essential ideas.[1] By confession of its own votaries, its day is now done in lands where it has held sway.[2]

A glance at the undoubted facts in regard to the early spread of Christianity shows how different a phenomenon we are here dealing with. From the first Christianity aimed at being a world-conquering principle—a world-conquering principle on the grandest scale and in the highest sense. The task it set before itself was stupendous. Its message, on the face of it, was not one likely to commend it to either Jew or Greek. "Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Gentiles foolishness."[3] It sprang

[1] For the historical Buddha (Gautama) was substituted a long series of imaginary Buddhas—past Buddhas, prospective Buddhas, a primordial Buddha, of whom the rest were emanations, an Amida Buddha, All-Saving and Compassionate, who takes believers to his own Paradise, etc.

[2] In 1896 one of the leading Buddhist Japanese journals wrote : "Buddhism is holding its own to-day by the mere force of inertia . . . within ten years Buddhism will fail in all its endeavours." In 1897 another Buddhist journal said : "Buddhism is dead. There is no advantage in concealing the fact" ; and still another asserted : "All that remains of Buddhism is its literature."

[3] 1 Cor. i. 23.

from a despised nation, and was preached at first by men unlearned in the schools.[1] It renounced temporal weapons; had nothing to rely on for success but the power of the naked truth. Jesus is reported to have said, "My Kingdom is not of this world; if My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight."[2] Paul declares, "The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds."[3] It had nothing to offer to temporal ambition, or for the gratification of the flesh; on the contrary, its disciples had to take on them the yoke of a strict and severe self-denial in regard to the pagan life around them,[4] and had to lay their account for reproach, persecution, and the possible loss of all things, often of life itself.[5] To the outward view, the new religion stepped into the arena for conflict, like a bared athlete, stripped of every earthly advantage.

Yet no one who reads the annals of the early progress of Christianity can doubt that, wherever this Gospel of the Kingdom was preached, it met with a remarkable reception. Its universal principle was still partially veiled in the Jewish-Christian communities, which clung, as a matter of observance, to the customs of their fathers, even where the legitimacy of the Gentile mission was acknowledged.[6] With Paul it freed itself from all limitations, and entered on a period of rapid and wide diffusion. Whereas Mithraism, when it appeared later, found no access into the Hellenic

[1] Acts iv. 13; 1 Cor. i. 26–28.

[2] John xviii. 36. [3] 2 Cor. x. 4.

[4] Rom. xii. 12–14; Col. iii. 5–10; Titus ii. 12; 1 Peter iv. 3, etc.

[5] Matt. v. 10, 11; 1 Thess. ii. 14, 15; iii. 3, 4; 1 Peter iv. 12–16, etc.

[6] Acts xxi. 20, 21; cf. Justin's *Dial. with Trypho*, chap. 47.

world, and gained its chief successes in the semi-barbarous provinces on the boundaries of the Empire,[1] it is the peculiarity of the Pauline mission that it followed the great lines of Roman communication, and aimed definitely at establishing itself in the large cities—the centres of civilization.[2] Its goal was "Rome also."[3] The Book of Acts and the Epistles show how striking were the results. Already in A.D. 58, before his own visit to the city, Paul could speak of the faith of the Church in Rome as "proclaimed throughout the whole world"; [4] and six years later, A.D. 64, according to Tacitus, the Christians involved in Nero's persecution were "an immense multitude." [5] Churches were planted in all the great cities of Asia Minor and Macedonia. Only very remarkable successes could justify such hyperboles of the Apostle as "preached to all creation under Heaven," "in all the world bearing fruit and increasing." [6]

It was a mistake of the older scholars to identify Gentile Christianity exclusively with Paulinism. Paul was only one worker in that vast Gentile field, and even his own ground was afterwards wrought over by other Apostles—e.g., by John in Asia Minor.[7] Our materials for estimating the progress of Christianity in the post-apostolic age are scant, but they are sufficient to allow of our perceiving the Gospel

[1] Cf. Harnack, ii. pp. 448–9.

[2] Cf. Ramsay, *Church in the Roman Empire*, p.147 (1st edition),etc.

[3] Rom. i. 15. [4] Rom. i. 8.

[5] *Multitudo ingens. Annals*, xv. 44. Clement of Rome (A.D. 96), speaking of the same persecution, uses a like expression, "great multitude."

[6] Col. i. 6, 23.

[7] Cf. Ritschl, *Altkatholische Kirche* (2nd edition), pp 272–3.

pursuing its way, and casting its spell alike on far East and far West, in centres of civilization and dim regions of barbarism. The Epistles of Ignatius and martyr-scenes like Polycarp's illuminate the darkness for us; a letter like Pliny's to Trajan (a. A.D. 110) throws a flood of light on the condition of the provinces of Bithynia and Pontus; inscriptions evidence the power of the Gospel in other parts of Asia Minor; Justin speaks of the religion of Christ as spread among all races of men.[1] Then, in the last quarter of the century, great Churches, as those of Carthage and Alexandria, flash into visibility, and abundant testimonies meet us of the vigour with which Christianity is pressing forward to its conquest of the Empire. Deadly persecutions could not stop this march of the Church to victory. Writings of clever satirists like Lucian, brilliant literary assaults like *The True Word* of Celsus, made, apparently, no impression upon it. The glowing periods of Tertullian may be rhetorically coloured, but it can hardly be doubted that they represent at least the essential fact.[2]

From the middle of the third century, at any rate, there is no question any longer that the Church was progressing by leaps and bounds.[3] This is the period in which Harnack puts its great expansion.[4] On the back of the most relentless persecution it had yet endured, it found itself suddenly raised by the success of the arms of Constantine to a position of acknowledged supremacy. When in this period we find the usurper Maxentius seeking to ingratiate himself with

[1] *Dial. with Trypho*, chap. 117.

[2] Cf. my *Neglected Factors in the Study of the Early Progress of Christianity*, pp. 62–4.

[3] Cf. Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.* viii. 1

[4] *Expansion*, ii. p. 455.

the Romans by pretending that he was of the Christian faith ; [1] or hear Maximin, most obstinate and cruel of the persecutors, giving as the reason why the persecution had been undertaken, that the emperors " had seen that almost all men were abandoning the worship of the gods, and attaching themselves to the party of the Christians," [2] we feel that Constantine's act was but the recognition of a victory that had already been achieved.

These facts have a justice done to them by modern scholars which we do not find in the cold and critical pages of Gibbon, who thinks that the Christians may have constituted at most one-twentieth of the whole population of the Empire in the time of Constantine (on his computation about 6,000,000). [3] " The facts of the case," says Harnack, " do justify the impression of the Church-fathers in the fourth century, of men like Arnobius and Eusebius and Augustine—the impression that their faith had spread from generation to generation with inconceivable rapidity." [4] He discards the extreme opinion that the number of Christians, even in the West, ever amounted to half the population,[5] but shows that there were extensive regions in which they were nearly, or entirely, the half, and large districts which at the opening of the fourth century " were practically Christian all over." Other districts were more backward, but in many of these the Christians formed " a very material portion "

[1] Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.* viii. 1.

[2] *Ibid.* ix. 9 (in the edict stopping the persecution).

[3] He reckons the population of the empire at 120,000,000 (chap. ii.). It is incredible, however, as V. Schulze says, that the Christians at this date should have been fewer than the Jews.

[4] *Expansion*, ii. p. 466.

[5] *Ibid.* p. 453.

of the population.[1] To our mind Harnack somewhat under-estimates the degree of the progress of Christianity prior to the third century, when, in his view, this "astonishing expansion" notably took place, and, specially, seriously understates the extent of the Christian element in Rome itself.[2] But the picture, even as he gives it, is sufficiently marvellous.

There are many other facts besides those already noticed which require to be taken into account in judging of this remarkable expansion of Christianity. It is not merely in its numerical progress that the penetrative power of the Gospel is seen—not merely, even, in the fact that it was in the important centres of population, chiefly, that its influence was concentrated—but in the degree in which it succeeded in pervading all ranks and classes of society, in finding its way into circles of learning and culture, and in affecting the thought and practice of Paganism itself. The old idea that Christianity found its converts only among the lowest and most servile classes has

[1] *Expansion*, ii.p. 457. Allowance must be made also for the ignorance arising from the extremely fragmentary character of our information. The history affords many illustrations of this. The Churches in Alexandria, Carthage, Spain break on us quite suddenly. Inscriptions show the existence of a numerous Christian Church in Cyrene, of which we do not hear otherwise.

[2] He ignores wholly, e.g., the evidence of the Catacombs, which, on the lowest computation of the numbers of the dead, show a far larger Christian population in Rome than he allows. (Cf. my *Neglected Factors*, pp. 35 ff.). He estimates the Christians in Rome in A.D. 250 at about 30,000 (out of 800,000 or 900,000) at a time when the Emperor Decius was declaring that he would rather have a rival emperor in Rome than a bishop (*Expansion*, ii. pp. 386–7). Too much is made of Origen's "very few" in a passage relating to agreement in prayer (*Expansion*, ii. p. 454), as against the other strong testimonies of Origen himself. Cf. also Harnack's own statements on Maxentius, etc. (ii. p. 459), which speak to a very extensive influence of Christianity in Rome.

to be given up. The Gospels and Epistles, furnishing as they do numerous examples of persons of higher social position attaching themselves to Christ and to His Church, already discredit such a notion. Men and women of rank and "substance," [1] "of honourable estate," "not a few," [2] wealthy and hospitable,[3] of official status,[4] possessors of land and houses,[5] owning slaves,[6] etc., appear freely in their pages. Early secular and ecclesiastical history, now corroborated in marvellous fashion by the Catacombs, shows that the influence of Christianity on the higher ranks of society, not least in Rome itself, had formerly been far under-estimated. It is enough to mention as early examples Pomponia Graecina, in the reign of Nero, Clemens the Consul and his wife Domitilla, near relatives of the Emperor Domitian—the crypt of the Flavians showing, as Harnack says, that "an entire branch of the Flavian family embraced the Christian faith" [7]—Acilius Glabrio, in the same reign, one of the wealthiest and most illustrious men in the State (crypt also found), Urania, the daughter of Herod Atticus, reputed "the richest man in Greece, and probably in the world," Caecilia, the noble virgin-martyr, etc.[8] It is undoubted that, as the Church grew in numbers, it also grew in wealth and social

[1] Luke viii. 2.

[2] Mark xv. 43; Acts xvii. 4, 12.

[3] Luke xix. 2; Acts xvi. 14; 1 Cor. xvi. 15; 3 John i.; 2 Tim. i. 16.

[4] Mark v. 22; Luke i. 3; vii. 5; Acts viii. 27; xiii. 1, 12; xvii. 34; xviii. 8; Rom. xvi. 23.

[5] Acts iv. 37; v. 1, 2; xii. 12.

[6] Ep. to Philemon; cf. Eph. vi. 9; Col. iv. 1.

[7] *Princeton Review*, July 1878, pp. 266–69.

[8] See the evidence in detail on this subject in my *Neglected Factors*, etc., Lect. ii.; cf. Harnack's *Expansion*, ii. pp. 183–239.

influence, often, as the examples of Carthage, Alexandria, and Spain show, and as the persecutions, when they came, revealed, to the great detriment of its purity.[1] Origen declares that in the multitude of believers were found "not only rich men, but persons of rank and delicate and high-born ladies."[2] The Court, in the third century, was conspicuous for the numbers of its Christians.[3]

As evidence of the influence of Christianity in literary and cultured circles, one need only point to the rise in the second century of a learned and eloquent Christian Apology, to the attempts at a combination of Christianity with Oriental theosophy in Gnosticism, to the wide range of knowledge and skill in writing displayed by the Early Church Fathers, to the famous Catechetical school in Alexandria, to the conflicts with heresies and development of Christian doctrine. Gnosticism itself is an instance of the powerful outgoing of force from Christianity on pagan ideas and beliefs; a similar influence may be traced in Neoplatonism; not improbably, also, in certain features of the pagan ethical revival and propaganda of the second century and of the heathen mysteries.[4]

Christianity, in short, had entered as a powerful leaven or ferment into ancient pagan society, and its secret influences, direct and indirect, were being

[1] *Neglected Factors*, pp. 130, 141–3; Harnack, ii. pp. 441–4.

[2] *Against Celsus*, iii. 9.

[3] Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.* vii. 10; viii. 6; Cf. Harnack, ii. pp. 202–3.

[4] Cf. *Neglected Factors*, Lect. iii. We must not be misled by the studied silence of pagan writers on Christianity (*Ibid.* pp. 166–67, and authorities quoted there). Origen could affirm even in his day that "almost the entire world is better acquainted with what Christians preach than with the favourite opinions of philosophers" (*Against Celsus*, i. 7).

felt on every hand. When one reflects on the solid opposition this young and unprivileged religion had to encounter in social odium, religious fanaticism, imperial proscription, philosophic scorn, and keen and unsparing literary attack, one may feel justified in affirming that never since has Christianity had such obstacles to overcome—has not even in the thought and culture, the science and philosophy, of our own time such difficulties to face—as it had in those first ages in which it achieved so notable a victory.

II

The way is now open for the consideration of the main problem we have in hand—the causes or factors which explain this remarkable expansion and influence of Christianity in the early centuries. And, as a first branch of the question—Can this success of Christianity be explained out of conditions in the pagan world itself? Or, How far do these conditions contribute factors for the explanation?

No impartial student of history will deny that the outward and inward conditions of the Roman Empire in the first century formed a peculiar preparation for the reception of a universal religion like Christianity. It is the undying merit of Baur to have elaborated this thesis with a philosophic breadth and historical insight which have left their mark on all subsequent study.[1] Christ's Gospel and Paul's teaching are pregnant with the idea of a ripeness of times. "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of

[1] Cf. his pages on the Universalism of the Roman Empire as a preparation for Christianity in the opening of his *Church History of the First Three Centuries.*

God is at hand." . . .[1] "When the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son."[2] Apologists like Origen dwell on the fact, though chiefly with an eye on the external preparation.[3] It is obvious, however, that this profound correlation between Christianity and the condition and needs of the age into which it entered, affording so manifest an evidence of a divine, overruling providence, may readily be turned to another purpose, and made the means of explaining the rise and victorious progress of Christianity as the result of a natural conjunction of causes in the time itself. This, in fact, is Baur's method. "It is the object of the historian," he tells us, "to show how the miracle of an absolute beginning may itself be regarded as a link of the chain of victory, and to resolve it, so far as the case admits, into its natural elements"; and he concludes, "The universalism of Christianity is essentially nothing but that universal form of consciousness at which the development of mankind had arrived at the time when Christianity appeared."[4] We must look, therefore, at the kind of forces at work in the pagan world, and see how far this is an adequate explanation.

The external aspects of the preparation for Christianity as a universal religion—those which naturally impressed the Apologists—though important and striking, are too familiar to need much illustration.[5]

[1] Mark i. 15; Cf. Reuss, *Christ. Theol. of Apostolic Age*, i. 139.

[2] Gal. v. 4.

[3] *Against Celsus*, ii. 30. Melito of Sardis draws attention to the fact that Christianity (the universal religion) was born at the same time as the Roman (universal) Empire (Euseb. *Ecc. Hist.* iv. 26).

[4] *Church Hist.* i. pp. 4, 5.

[5] A good sketch is given in Uhlhorn's *Conflict of Christianity* pp. 2–21.

One thinks here of the union of all peoples and nations in one vast political organization, under the rule of a single head; of the net-work of inter-communication spread throughout the empire; of the wide diffusion of Greek as a common language; of the peace that prevailed at the time of the introduction of Christianity, and the like. These outward conditions formed the necessary frame-work without which the propagation of a religion like Christianity would hardly have been possible. By breaking down external barriers, and promoting intercourse among the peoples; by the extension of Roman law and administration to the provinces; still more by the imperial idea which the system enshrined, and which early threw out an image of itself in that strange *simulacrum* of a universal religion—the worship of the Emperor,—the new order fostered the spirit of universalism which, from other causes, was already in the air, and, so far, prepared an atmosphere for the Gospel. These things were *aids* for such a religion as Christianity when it came: furnished channels along which its influence might flow; but they had no efficacy in themselves to create the religion that was needed. In some respects, indeed, they raised new obstacles, and created fresh perils. This is strikingly illustrated in the case of the worship of the Emperor, in which, for the first time, the ancient world gained a centre of religious unity. In this cult, which had amazing popularity, the Roman Empire expressed its inmost spirit. Caesarism was the apotheosis of brute force. It rested on the army. It was the army that made the Emperor; the army that could unmake him. The worship of the Emperor was thus no chance phenomenon, but had a true logic in the heart of it. As the deification of brute

power, it was the strongest possible antithesis to the worship of the Christ. It was the worship of the Beast.[1]

There were, however, it is not to be denied, far profounder, and far more positive, lines of preparation for Christianity in the ancient world than those first indicated. The age was one, as Baur well shows, straining out to universalism in every direction.[2] If pagan religions had decayed, it was partly, as he says, because "the spirit, whose religious feelings the former once served to express, had expanded and risen beyond them."[3] No small part of this result was due to the development of Greek philosophy from the time of Socrates. Platonism, with its lofty idealism, was a powerful force in this direction—many, like Justin and Augustine, found it a bridge to higher conceptions,—but to apprehend the full measure of the preparation, the whole development must be taken into account. The effects are chiefly seen along three lines. 1. In a more inward view of morality. With the overthrow of the old traditional morality, there began with Socrates the search for a better ground of morality in man's own nature. Socrates bade men turn from the outward to the inward, drove man in upon himself, bade him seek his law of action in something within himself. Especially does the later post-Aristotelian philosophy bear this predominantly ethical character. This is seen in the nature of the questions discussed—the idea of the

[1] Cf. Uhlhorn's *Conflict of Christianity*, pp. 56–62; Boissier's *La Religion Romaine*, i. pp. 122–208. This worship of the Emperor, Uhlhorn says, was the point where Christianity and heathenism came into sharpest conflict (p. 60).

[2] Cf. Uhlhorn, pp. 21 ff.

[3] *Church History*, i. p. 10.

good, the nature of the moral end, the relation of virtue to happiness. Stoic and Epicurean were at the opposite poles of ethical theory, but they were agreed in this, that man's true good is within, is to be sought for in the sphere of the soul. 2. In the recognition of a nature in man which unites him with his fellows, and lays the basis of a universal moral fellowship—this specially through Stoicism. With the breaking up of the old State-life in Greece, this nobler conception survived; and when at length Rome had founded a universal empire, Stoicism was ready to furnish the intellectual counterpart in its doctrine of an equality of man, and of a universal commonwealth or fraternity of mankind, based on reason. 3. In the tendency to monotheism observable in all the greater thinkers. Especially in the writings of the Platonists and Stoics of the Roman age [1]—not to go further back—whatever the explanation, we cannot but acknowledge that the human mind was groping, and not altogether unsuccessfully, towards that conception of the unity, the all-embracing providence, and the unerring wisdom and goodness of God, found already in Judaism, and soon to be made the common possession of men by Christianity.

Here, then, it may be thought, are strains of teaching and affinities of ideas in the ancient world, which may in considerable part account, if not by their synthesis for the *origin* of Christianity, at least for the hold the new religion was enabled to take of earnest minds, and so for its rapid progress. And it is certainly to be conceded that the progress of Christianity could never have been what it was, either in range or in quality, had this intellectual and spiritual

[1] E.g. Seneca, Plutarch, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius.

preparation not preceded. If, however, any one supposes that Christianity was in any appreciable degree indebted to the ideas now mentioned, either for the substance of its teaching, or for the forces which gave it driving power in the Roman world, such an opinion must be pronounced mistaken. Here is where Baur erred. "When an old system decays," he thinks, "it is because the new truth which is to succeed it is already there: the old would not decay, if the new had not arrived, be it but in germ, and had been long labouring to undermine and eat away the existing structure." [1] But it is not really so. The old may decay, as Baur himself abundantly shows had happened in this case—"Paganism had sunk into the mindless religion of the vulgar. . . . Decay and dissolution had completely seized on the old religions." [2] But it in no wise follows that an age which, in its better minds, is conscious of the hollowness of the existing forms, and has even thoughts and aspirations of a higher order, is able from its own resources to bring forth the new religion, charged with spiritual forces, which is needed to supply the lack.

It would, indeed, be strange if the philosophies of Greece, which failed to save Greece itself, or prevent it from sinking in intellectual bankruptcy and moral dissolution, had been able to save the Roman Empire, when transplanted to that yet more corrupt soil. Nor did they. The views promulgated were too unclear, were too abstract and speculative, lacked too much the fundamental element of certainty, to enable them to reach the popular mind, or lay hold

[1] *Church History*, i. p. 10.

[2] *Ibid.* i. pp. 6, 9. In qualification see Uhlhorn, *Conflict of Christianity*, pp. 40 ff.

on the popular conviction.[1] The nobler minds did not dream of disturbing the State religion, but lent themselves to maintain it by rigorous enforcement of the laws. The theism of a Seneca and an Epictetus still rests on the Stoical nature-basis, and Plutarch's Platonism does not hinder him from attempting a reconciliation between his philosophical conceptions and the popular theology by the help of a doctrine of demons or undergods, and through reading into the myths a deeper allegorical meaning. The haughty self-sufficient temper of Stoicism was profoundly alien from the dispositions inculcated by Christianity. Stoics talked of a universal city—a brotherhood of reason; but no attempt was ever made by any one to start a society in which such an ideal might find realization.[2] The hopelessness of any regeneration from forces within paganism will best be seen by glancing at the actual condition of the Graeco-Roman world into which Christianity came.

The picture of the frightful moral corruption of the ancient heathen world has been so often drawn that it is only needful to touch on leading points.[3] Nor is it necessary to indulge in any rhetorical exaggeration. Able writers have done their best to bring out relieving features, and tone down the blackness of the customary descriptions,[4] and we thankfully accept what they have to tell us of the many better elements still surviving in that ancient pagan society.[5] Yet

[1] Cf. Uhlhorn, pp. 28, 37, 51–2, etc.

[2] Cf. Lightfoot, *Philippians*, pp. 306–8, 319, 322.

[3] Cf. the descriptions in Uhlhorn, Schaff, Pressensé, Lecky, Farrar, Fisher, etc., and see next note.

[4] Among the writers who take this more favourable view may be mentioned Friedländer, Renan, Merivale, Boissier, Hatch, Dill, etc.

[5] Cf. specially Dill's *Roman Society from Nero to M. Aurelius*, pp. 1–3; 142–4. Dill's charming picture of "The Circle of the

when all deductions have been made, the general impression of the character of the age, as pictured by those who knew it best, is but little affected. There were honourable exceptions, and perhaps more of them than we have been accustomed to think; but it remains the fact that it was not the vulgar satirist, but the nobler spirits themselves, who took the gloomiest view of the corruption of their times, and saw least hope of a remedy. Whether Seneca should be ranked among these "nobler spirits" may be doubted, for his personal character was far from harmonizing with his lofty teaching; but his view, at least, of the vice of his time was of the darkest. "All things," he writes, "are full of iniquity and vice. More crimes are committed than can be remedied by force. A monstrous contest of wickedness is carried on. Daily the lust of sin increases; daily the sense of shame diminishes. Casting away all regard for what is good and honourable, pleasure runs riot without restraint. Vice no longer hides itself, it stalks forth before all eyes. So public has iniquity become, so mightily does it flame up in all hearts, that innocence is no longer rare: it has ceased to exist." [1] This savours of rhetoric; but writers like Livy, Tacitus, Lucian, and historians and moralists generally, speak hardly less strongly. "Lucian and Marcus Aurelius,"

Younger Pliny" may serve as an example of the whole. On the other hand, it is impossible, in face of overwhelming evidence, to acquiesce in so sweeping a statement as that of Dr. Hatch: "It is probable that there was in ancient Rome, as there is in modern London, a preponderating mass of those who loved their children and their homes, who were good neighbours and faithful friends, who conscientiously discharged their civil duties, and were in all the current senses of the word 'moral' men" (*Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 139–40).

[1] *De Irâ*, ii. 9.

says Dill, "seem to be as hopeless about the moral condition of humanity as Seneca and Petronius were in the darkest days of Nero's tyranny." [1] "Rome has become great by her virtues till now," writes Livy, "when we can neither bear our vices nor their remedies." [2] "Tacitus," we are told, "is a moralist with a sad clinging pessimism. He is doomed to be the chronicler of an evil time, although he will save from oblivion the traces and relics of ancient virtues. He has Seneca's pessimistic theory of evolution." [3] Juvenal, again, while possessing "a higher moral intuition, a vision of a higher life," "is an utter pessimist about his time, more extreme even than Tacitus. His age, if we believe him, has attained the climax of corruption, and posterity will never improve upon its finished depravity." [3]

If it be thought that these depressing descriptions are born of what Dill calls "The Terror" in the period from Nero to Domitian, and that a new era of hope opened for the empire with the disappearance of that tyranny, and the ethical revival of the age of the Antonines, it must be owned that the evidence does not warrant us in assuming that, beneath the surface, the change was really great. The utmost that can be said is, that "it was easier to be virtuous in the reign of M. Aurelius than in the reign of Nero, and it was specially easier for a man of the highest social grade." [4] The ethical revival was a reality, of which many noble things might be said. There was teaching, preaching, declaiming, on a scale that had never before been heard of.[5] It may be doubted, indeed, whether this excessive insistence on ethics—often a matter

[1] *Roman Society*, p. 6.
[2] In *Præf.*
[3] Dill, p. 26.
[4] Dill, p. 7.
[5] Cf. my *Neglected Factors*, etc., pp. 185, 190–206. See also

of rhetorical display—was itself a healthy sign. An age, as Uhlhorn says, which is always feeling its pulse in an ethical respect already confesses itself to be in a sickly and declining state.[1] In any case, we have the testimony of the philosophic Emperor himself that, despite it all, the times were hopelessly evil.[2] The ethical propaganda, in fact, had but the most transient results. The tide of corruption was there, checked, dammed up for the moment, but ready to burst forth the instant the barriers were removed.[3] This was seen when Marcus died, and Commodus succeeded. It was as if the powers of the pit were let loose again. So far from the much-praised age of the Antonines being the beginning of a new day, it was really the last glow of the sunset before the light finally disappeared. Renan, as a sympathetic interpreter of the age, may be cited. "At bottom," he says, "the progress wrought by the reigns of Antoninus and Marcus Aurelius had only been superficial. Everything was bordered by a varnish of hypocrisy, by exterior appearances which were taken as caused by the unison of the two wise Emperors. . . . What reigned throughout all was a deep gloom."[4]

With due allowance, therefore, for whatever may be said in alleviation of the picture of the gross moral corruption of the Roman world in the first centuries, it must be contended that the main counts in the indictment of that age stand unshaken. 1. All writers note the unsound social conditions of the age—the

Merivale's *Romans Under the Empire*, chaps. lx., lxvi.; Dill's *Roman Society*, Bk. ii.; Renan, *Marc. Aurèle.*, chap. iii., Hatch, etc.

[1] p. 92. [2] Cf. Dill, pp. 6, 303, 335.

[3] See the vivid picture in the commencement of Froude's "Origen and Celsus," in *Short Studies*, vol. iv.

[4] *Marc. Aurèle*, chap. xxvi.

boundless luxury and extravagance at one end of the social scale,[1] and deep poverty and degradation at the other. The slavery on which the social structure was built meant the destruction of free labour and the cutting out of a middle class sustained by honest industry, with unspeakable degradation and vice to the immense masses of human beings in the servile condition.[2] As a natural result, labour itself was held in contempt, and the idle, frivolous crowds had to be supported in other ways—by doles from the State, as hangers-on upon the rich, etc. 2. Equally unmistakable is the testimony to the ruin of domestic life, and the shameless licentiousness and profligacy among both men and women, though doubtless noble exceptions can be cited.[3] Marriage had fallen largely into desuetude ;[4] divorces were common ; women of the highest rank condescended to acts of the most shameful lewdness. Juvenal's Sixth Satire could not have been written unless it had rested on a basis of fact in the general condition of society. 3. Another point is the spirit of cruelty and delight in brutal and sanguinary amusements : on this we need not dwell.[5] Idleness, frivolity, sycophancy, licentiousness, luxury, cruelty, such practices as exposure of children, infanticide, driving out sick or aged slaves to die, etc.,[6]—these are not casual blots, but deep-seated plagues, affecting the entire social body.

[1] The incredible extravagance of the age may be seen illustrated in Dill, pp. 20, 32, etc., or in Uhlhorn, pp. 104 ff.

[2] On slavery, cf. Uhlhorn, pp. 131 ff. ; for a slightly milder view, Lecky, *European Morals*, i. pp. 318–26.

[3] Cf. Lecky, ii. pp. 320–29.

[4] " A great and general indisposition towards marriage, which Augustus attempted in vain to arrest by his laws against celibacy," etc. (Lecky, ii, p. 322).

[5] Cf. specially Lecky, i. pp. 287–305.

[6] Cf. Lecky, ii. pp. 26–30. Seneca defended the killing of weak and deformed infants (*De Irâ*, I. 15).

It is very evident that from a society so radically corrupt forces were not likely to proceed that would help Christianity much in its endeavours to establish a Kingdom of God among men. It was a society that needed salvation; not one that could bring it. There is, however, yet another aspect under which this society must be regarded, which does bear directly on the readiness shown by many to accept the Gospel, viz., the condition in which the Roman world found itself *religiously*, as the result of the action of the causes—intellectual and moral—already described.

The two facts which stand out most clearly in this connexion are—1. The wide spread of scepticism, or total unbelief, among the cultured or educated classes; and 2. The vast growth of superstition, and a great influx of foreign cults, in the empire generally. The scepticism was but a continuation of the scepticism of Greece, and strengthened itself by the aid of Greek philosophy. It took the form, first, of an absolute disbelief in the popular religion, even while insisting that the State-religion was to be maintained as a measure of political expediency; then passed over, with many, to doubt or open denial of the existence of any gods, and, very generally, to doubt or denial of a future life.[1] Even where there was not positive unbelief, a dread uncertainty hung over everything. The extraordinary development of superstition, not simply among the common people, but in all classes,[2] and the great influx of foreign

[1] On the prevalence of Scepticism, cf. Lecky, i. pp. 170–74; Uhlhorn, pp. 46, ff. Pliny declares it to be a sure result of science that there are no gods: "Nature alone is god" (*Nat. Hist.* ii. 7). On doubt or denial of immortality, cf. Dill, pp. 485 ff.

[2] See especially Dill, pp. 168, 443 ff. Pliny, Suetonius, Tacitus, Marcus Aurelius, etc., were all deeply superstitious.

religions are not a contradiction of the former fact, but a confirmation of it. It was because the heart was so empty of real faith that it betook itself so readily to monstrous superstitions; because the old gods failed to satisfy that there was such a craving for new ones. The foreign cults most in favour were Oriental ones—e.g., the worship of Isis and Serapis, later of Mithra. This is a significant fact, as showing that the religious consciousness had entered on a deeper phase; was now more earnest in its desire for spiritual rest and peace. For, whatever the demerits of the Oriental religions, there was at least expressed in them a deeper feeling of the discord, the pain, the mystery of existence, and in the mysteries connected with some of them were ideas and rites which had reference to redemption.[1]

It is quite true that the characteristics of the age just described, in certain respects, made the task of Christianity not easier, but harder. The fondness for new gods and goddesses, new rituals and worships —especially for such as gratified the craving for excitement, and had great elaboration, pomp, and splendour—was one to which Christianity, as a simple, spiritual, unadorned religion, without images, temples, ceremonies, or outward attractions of any kind, could offer no satisfaction. The fanatical superstition of the age, again, so far from helping the progress of Christianity, was everywhere its greatest hindrance.[2] In the medley of religions which filled the empire, there was no one which set up for itself any exclusive

[1] On the ideas, rites, influence of the cults of Isis and Mithra, see especially Dill, pp. 560 ff., 585 ff. On the relation with Christianity cf. my *Neglected Factors*, pp. 209–15. The moral influence of the Mysteries must not be exaggerated. Many facts show that it was really not great.

[2] Cf. the scene at Ephesus, Acts xix. 24 ff.

claim. Devotion to one cult did not mean rejection of the rest. But Christianity had none of this tolerance. It was with it war to the death against all forms of pagan idolatry. If the God whom the Christians worshipped was the true God, there was no room for any other. Hence the popular rage which the new religion everywhere aroused against itself. It was to the populace a gloomy, unsocial superstition, which they must stamp out in self-defence. With its pure, holy spirit, it must have been an abomination to the crowds which flocked to the amphitheatres, or to the shrines of Bacchus or Venus.

What can be said on the other side is, that, while opposed to the great mass of the surface sentiment of the age, Christianity met the *deeper* wants men were feeling, and so related itself to all the better tendencies already traced. In the very depths of that grovelling superstition, of that prostration of the soul at foreign shrines, evidence is seen, as just remarked, of that weariness and disgust of life, that longing for salvation, that desire for knowledge, certainty, communion with the Unseen, which formed so important a part of the preparation for the Gospel. One may doubt whether this was not often the most influential factor of all in securing for Christianity the favourable hearing it obtained. The profoundest preparation of the pagan world for the new religion, surely, was its sense of utter *need*.

III

A suitability in the general condition of the Roman world for the reception of a universal moral and spiritual religion like Christianity must thus be recog-

nized; but it must now likewise be apparent that the real key to the explanation of the remarkable expansion of Christianity in the early centuries is to be sought for within the religion itself, and not in any external or adventitious circumstances. Judaism, by its wide dispersion, its synagogues, its circulation of the Jewish Scriptures in the Greek tongue, its fringe of proselytes and following of more loosely-attracted converts—the "devout persons" of the New Testament[1]—afforded, especially at the beginning, a helpful bridge for the passage of the Gospel to the Gentiles. But the power by which the religion of the crucified gained its victories was still wholly its own, though it claimed that all the hopes and promises of the older Covenant were fulfilled in it.

We are brought here to the kernel of the matter. Christianity won the day because, as already hinted, it met the deepest necessity of the age into which it had come. It met the monotheistic tendency of the age; it met the universalistic tendency of the age; it met the deeper and stronger ethical tendency represented by Stoicism. Above all, it met the deep craving of the age for spiritual peace and rest, its need of certainty, its longing for redemption, and for direct communion with God. To these wants it brought a satisfaction which no religion of the time could pretend to offer. It did not meet them by teaching merely—as if Christ were only a new Socrates—but it met them by the positive exhibition of the redeeming love of God in Christ, by the setting forth of the personal Jesus in His life, death and resurrection, by the proclamation of forgiveness of sins through Him, by the bestowal of the power of the Holy Spirit. It was not a doctrinal religion merely, but a religion of

[1] Acts x. 2, 22; xiii. 16, 26, etc.

dynamic—of power. It did not only *tell* men what to do, but gave them power to do it. Its ideals were the highest, and in many ways new—a "transvaluation of all values," to borrow a phrase of Nietzsche's [1]—but it brought them within men's reach as realizable. Hence it prevailed. In a striking passage in his *Representative Government*, John Stuart Mill says: "On the day when the proto-martyr was stoned to death at Jerusalem, while he who was to be the Apostle of the Gentiles stood by 'consenting unto his death,' would any one have supposed that the party of the stoned man were there and then the strongest power in society? And has not the event proved that they were so? Because theirs was the most powerful of existing beliefs." [2] That is in brief the explanation of the success of Christianity. It was the strongest thing in the world at that time, and it was sure to conquer. The sword could not stop it.

In investigating this connexion of the success of the Gospel in the heathen world with its essential nature, the important thing is to be certain that we get to the real core of the religion, and do not stop short, in our search for causes, at any inferior point. Baur, e.g., finds the essence of Christianity, and the secret of its success, in the general idea of its "spirituality," [3] and, no doubt, so far rightly. But while the pure spirituality of the Gospel—its freedom "from everything merely external, sensuous, or material"

[1] *Umwertung aller Werte.*

[2] "But what is Christianity itself? . . . We answer in a word, its spirituality. . . . When we inquire what constitutes the absolute character of Christianity, we must point to its spirituality" (*Church Hist.*, i. p. 9).

[3] Cf. Justin's account of his fascination by Platonism in *Dial. with Trypho*, chap. ii.

—may have commended it to minds trained to spiritual contemplation,[1] it is obvious that to great multitudes in paganism, both educated and uneducated, this very spirituality must have presented itself as a drawback and difficulty. It was, indeed, the ground of the charge of "atheism" against the Christians that their religion was without temples, and images, and the other paraphernalia of worship.[2] It is tempting, again, to think of Christianity as commending itself by its monotheism; and here, unquestionably, as already seen, is a side of relation with the highest strain of thought in later paganism. There is little doubt, e.g., that it was chiefly as a system of monotheism that Christianity appealed to a secular mind like Constantine's. It is nevertheless true, as the pagan speculations themselves show, that abstract monotheism, divorced from other elements, has little power to found or propagate a religion. Christianity was a great deal more than an abstract monotheism; had it been only this, it would not have achieved the success it did. It is to be remembered also how Christianity differed from pagan monotheism in its inability to tolerate or reconcile itself with existing idolatries. Between it and existing cults there could be, as remarked above, no compromise.[3] It is inadequate, again, to assign as a cause of the success of Christianity its preaching of immortality.[4] Paganism, indeed, sorely needed the comfort of an assured hope of a future life; but an abstract doctrine of immortality

[1] *On Represent. Govt.*, 9. 6.

[2] Cf. Origen, *Against Celsus*, vii. 62 ff.

[3] Gibbon gives as one of his Causes the "intolerant zeal" of the early Christians (chap. xv.). But *intolerant* zeal does not seem a likely way of gaining favour.

[4] This is another of Gibbon's secondary causes.

would have been as ineffective for the ends of propagation as an abstract monotheism; and the *kind* of immortality Christianity preached had little in common with the speculations of the schools. It was an immortality bound up with Christ, and involved a resurrection—a doctrine at which the speculative mind stumbled.[1]

We seem on surer ground when the accent is laid on the changed characters and holy lives of the Christians, on martyr devotion, and on the new spirit of love, manifesting itself in deeds of active philanthropy, which Christianity brought into the world. For here undeniably we are in contact with the purest spirit of the new religion—that by which it was most directly and impressively brought under the notice of the heathen. Justin tells us that his conversion was partly due to witnessing the constancy of the martyrs,[2] and there were numerous cases of the same kind.[3] On the transforming effects of Christianity, which stamped it from the first as a social regenerative force of the mightiest order, we shall have more to say immediately. Meanwhile it is to be observed that even here we are in contact with the stream

[1] Cf. Acts xvii. 32; 1 Cor. xv. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 18. It is to be admitted that in certain, perhaps most, of the Mysteries, there were points of contact with the doctrine of the Resurrection, only, however, as nature-myths.

[2] 2 *Apol.* 12.

[3] The Martyr spirit of the age is well exemplified in Ignatius (*Ep. to Eph.* I; *Romans*, v., vi.: "Let fire and the cross, let the crowds of wild beasts . . . come upon me: only let me attain to Jesus Christ"; and in Polycarp (Eus. *Ecc. Hist.*, iv. 15). Cf. Eusebius, viii., ix., on the Martyrs under Diocletian: "At these scenes we have been present ourselves, when we also observed the divine power of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself present, and effectually displayed in them," etc.

rather than with the fountain which it flows; with the outcome of the divine life rather than with its source. Still less can we lay the stress on miracles, or on "miraculous claims," in explanation of the success of Christianity.[1] It is now agreed on all hands that these had little to do with the general propagation of the Gospel. So far as miracles entered into the Christian argument, it was usually not the act of power, so much as the *character* of the work, to which appeal was made.[2] On the pagan side miracles were less seldom doubted than ascribed to sorcery.[3]

Shall we then, mounting higher, seek the ultimate secret of the power of the Gospel in its doctrine of redemption—in the Cross? Here we might seem to have with us the Master Himself, when He declares: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself";[4] and His great Apostle, when he extols the Gospel of the Cross as "the power of God."[5] But attention to these very words shows us that something lies yet behind. The emphasis in Christ's saying is on the personal pronoun—"*I*, if I be lifted up." In Paul's statement, while "Christ Crucified" is declared to be "unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Gentiles foolishness," it is, after all, not specifically of "Christ Crucified," but of "Christ" Himself, that the assertion is made: "Unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Here we come to the ultimate fact—*Christ's own Personality;* a Personality to be interpreted, indeed, through all that He was and

[1] Yet another of Gibbon's Causes.
[2] Cf. Origen, *Against Celsus*, i. 67, 68, etc.
[3] *Ibid.* i. 6, 68; Justin, 1 *Apol.* 30.
[4] John xii. 32.
[5] Rom. i. 16; 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

did; yet that which stands behind, and gives significance and potency to everything else in His religion—stands behind Cross, Gospel, Church, Scriptures, doctrines, changed characters, social transformations, and makes them what they are—from which, supremely, stream out the forces that have made the world new! The Apostle John gave the secret when he wrote: "This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." [1]

That here we reach the real spring of the marvellous energy displayed by the Gospel in its early course can readily be verified. One might proceed deductively in showing how this faith in Jesus as the Son of God is necessarily a principle of moral victory in the hearts that possess it, and in society. We prefer, in closing, to ask historically how this faith in Jesus *did* work in the ancient world in gaining its moral victories.

The early Christians were well acquainted with the historical facts of Christ's life from careful oral instruction,[2] and, later, from the written Gospels.[3] The image of the historical Jesus must, therefore, ever have been with them as an example and inspiration to goodness. But Jesus was never to these early believers simply a wise and gracious Teacher and Example. His Person and character had for them from the beginning an absolute worth. He was their risen and exalted Lord. They conceived of Him,

[1] 1 John v. 4, 5. [2] Cf. Luke i. 4.

[3] The Gospels were regularly read in the Christian Assemblies in Justin's time (1 *Apol.*, 66, 67). In the New Testament an acquaintance with the facts of Christ's life is presupposed in the exhortations to imitations of Christ's patience, forbearance, gentleness, etc.

with Paul and John, as pre-existing in "the form of God,"[1] and as humbling Himself to become man, and suffer death, for man's salvation. Without theologizing on the subject, they raised Him in their thoughts and worship to equality with the Father. The effects of this transcendent conception of Christ's Person on the mission to the heathen world can readily be seen. Its first result was to invest *Christ's Person itself* with an absoluteness which could belong to no other. This sense of absoluteness the primitive Christian consciousness expressed by the simple word "Lord." Later thought found an expression for it in the term "Logos." Ritschl shows how the conception of the Logos in the Apologists and their successors, designating as the word did "the universal and absolute character of Christianity," secured the recognition of Christianity as a universal religion.[2] A second and consequent effect was to clothe Christ with an absolute *authority*, and to give to everything in His revelation a character of immovable *certainty*. One is constantly struck, in the early Christian writers, with this note of confident assurance of the truth of their message, as compared with the tentative, uncertain, vacillating opinions of the pagan teachers. Pagan philosophy was groping in confessed darkness on the highest subjects: here was truth, drawn not from their own wisdom, but from the "Word" Himself, who had been manifested, and had given them an understanding, that they might know Him that was true.[3]

This absoluteness conceived of as belonging to Christ's Person, however, bore not only on the know-

[1] Phil. ii. 6 ff.
[2] *Altkath. Kirche*, pp. 307, 317.
[3] 1 John ii. 27; v. 9–13, 20.

edge He came to impart on God and divine things, but equally on His *work* as Saviour. Christianity was above all things else a message of salvation—of reconciliation, of peace with God, of a new life in the Spirit. This, supremely, was the aspect of it which met the need of a world ill at ease with itself, and longing for a way of escape from its woes. The weary seeker for a cleansing from his sins, and hope of immortality, found in Christ's Gospel a satisfaction such as all the mystical rites of paganism could not yield him. Great power lay also in the historical character of this redemption. Dill, speaking of Mithraism, says of the sacrifice of the bull, "which seemed to occupy the same space in Mithraic devotion as the Sacrifice on Calvary:" "But one great weakness of Mithraism lay precisely here—that, in place of the narrative of a Divine life, instinct with human sympathy, it had only to offer the cold symbolism of a cosmic legend."[1] Here, again, was a lever of incalculable power with which to act on the heathen world.

Lastly, with this absoluteness of Christ's Person was connected, in the belief of the Early Church, the gift of the *Holy Spirit*—Illuminator, Renewer, Sanctifier. In Montanism the Spirit was connected with gifts and prophesyings. But already in Paul's and in the other New Testament Epistles, the idea of the Spirit as the author of miraculous "gifts" recedes behind that of His operation in regeneration and the quiet renewal and development of Christian character; and the production of the fruits of discipleship in holy living.[2] Above all is His working seen in the developing and perfecting of the supreme grace of *love*.[3]

[1] *Roman Society*, etc., pp. 622–3. [2] Gal. v. 16–26. [3] 1 Cor. xiii.

These great dynamic forces in the heart of Christianity once recognized, the fullest place can be given to the wealth of new and revolutionary ideas associated with them, to which they gave vitalizing power, and to the forces of social transformation and amelioration which it brought into the pagan world in such fullness. We do not think here of a bare monotheism, or abstract doctrine of immortality, but of great pregnant truths like the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, God's loving providence, the infinite value and redeemableness of every human soul, accountability and judgment, the spiritual equality of master and slave, rich and poor, in God's Kingdom, the place of woman by man's side as his spiritual helpmeet and equal. Who shall estimate the force of the lofty ethical ideals of Christ when seen actually realized in human lives, or the continuous elevating influence of that image of perfect holiness flashed on the world in Christ Himself ?[1]

We are not left to conjecture as to the effects of these ideas and forces; they are "writ large" in the whole history of the moral changes wrought by the spirit of Christianity in that decaying and hopelessly corrupt civilization already described, into the midst of which it came. The Apologists for the Gospel have no stronger arguments to present on its behalf than the moral miracles wrought, and visible to all; in the changed character of its converts, their pure and upright lives, their well-ordered homes, the abounding charity and beneficence with which the new religion inspired them.[2] The active and organized charity of the Church—to which paganism could show

[1] Cf. Lecky, *European Morals*, i. p. 412.

[2] Cf. Justin, 1 *Apol.* 12, 15, 16, 30, etc.; Tert. *Apol.* 2, *To the Nations*, 4; Origen, *Against Celsus*, iii. 68, etc.

no parallel—and the wealth of beneficent institutions which that charity created, were a constant object-lesson to the heathen of the new spirit of holiness and love which had entered the world through Christ.[1]

In an age like our own, when Christianity as a power of social regeneration is again upon its trial, it is fitting that these inestimable services of Christ's religion to the ancient world should be gratefully recalled. The chief may be briefly summed up thus :—

1. A new spirit of active charity.
2. A new ideal of moral purity.
3. Purification of the family.
4. The elevation of woman.
5. The amelioration of the condition of the slave.
6. The consecration of labour.

Only a few points in this large field, which has been ably dealt with in many special works,[2] can be singled out for illustration.

Jesus well speaks of the commandment of *love* He gave to His disciples as "a new commandment." It was new to paganism, into the dark, unloving depths of which Christianity, at the beginning of our era, shot the ray of a new hope[3]. As the Christian

[1] Lecky, *European Morals*, ii. pp. 83, 84 ff.; 90, 107, etc. This author says: "Christianity for the first time made charity a rudimentary virtue. . . . It has covered the globe with institutions of mercy, absolutely unknown in the whole pagan world" (pp. 84, 91).

[2] The following may be named in English. C. Loring Brace, *Gesta Christi;* Uhlhorn, *Christian Charity in the Christian Church* (E. T.); C. Schmidt, *The Social Results of Early Christianity* (E. T.); Lecky, *Hist. of European Morals.*

[3] The exceptions and partial qualifications above alluded to (p. 210), on the condition of paganism, are not forgotten. In view of them all, Uhlhorn does not hesitate to entitle the opening chapter in his work on *Christian Charity!* "A World without Love."

Church spread, a kindling breath of love began to make itself felt through all the relations of society. The Churches themselves were full of this love, and, on the whole, nobly maintained their function of setting to the world an example of active kindness. Plentiful oblations were brought to the love-feast. The alms-chest was liberally replenished. The poor, the widows, the orphans, were generously provided for. Hospitality was ungrudgingly exercised. The sick, the prisoners, those in exile, such as were condemned to die, were objects of constant care. Some Christians in Numidia having fallen into the hands of their enemies as prisoners of war, Cyprian's congregation in Carthage raised a sum equal to about £850 towards their ransom.[1] No wonder the heathen exclaimed: "See how these Christians love one another!"

This charity of the Church, however, was far from confined to its own members. Towards the heathen population it took the form of an omnipresent and active philanthropy.[2] The poor were assisted, foundlings rescued, lepers tended, the sick ministered to. When plagues broke out in Carthage and Alexandria, the heathen fled, but the Christians remained, organized corps of help, and rendered unselfish service.[3] Paganism was destitute of any trace of organized charity. But the spirit of Christian love soon began to crystallize itself into institutions. On all sides, after the Empire had become Christian, were to be seen rising houses for strangers, houses for the sick, houses for widows, orphanages, houses for the

[1] Cyprian, Ep. lix.

[2] "Our compassion spends more in the streets," says Tertullian, "than yours does in the temples" (*Apol.* 42).

[3] Cf. Uhlhorn, pp. 187–9.

rearing of children, whether bereaved of friends or foundlings, houses for the aged, asylums for the blind, dumb, insane,[1] etc. A striking testimony was borne by the Emperor Julian when, urging the pagans to like works of love, he said: "It is disgraceful, when the godless Galileans support our poor as well as their own, that our people should be without our help."[2] The same humane spirit which dictated these offices of charity fought unceasingly against all that savoured of cruelty in the life of the time, and especially against the gladiatorial and other sanguinary sports of the arena. It was through the action of a brave monk Telemachus, who, in A.D. 404, leaped into the ring and sacrificed himself, that these abhorrent spectacles were finally abolished.

Little need be said of the services to *moral purity*. The standard set up by Christianity was higher than sages had ever dreamt of; yet in Christ men found a power enabling them to attain to it. The obligations to holy living were of the strictest; yet the worst slaves of lust and passion were seen asuming them. To the astonishment of their heathen neighbours, they laid aside their old vices, and became humble, patient, truthful, sober, just. In the changed position of woman as wife, mother, daughter, in the Christian household, we see an evidence of the new ideas about woman introduced and diffused through ancient society by the Gospel. This, with its result in the creation of the Christian home, was unquestionably one of the most beneficent, and at the same time most deep-reaching, of the reforms wrought by Christianity. It placed marriage on its original divine foundation. It forbade divorce save for the gravest cause. It united

[1] Cf. Uhlhorn, p. 330; Brace, p. 62 (2nd Edit.).
[2] Cf. Uhlhorn, p. 326; Schmidt, p. 328.

the members of the household in bonds of love, and bade them labour, not only for each other's temporal, but for each other's spiritual welfare. Christian homes were as bright lights in a dense surrounding darkness; oases in a moral desert; centres of pure influence amidst the corruptions of a paganism which, with its neglect of woman, its contempt for infant life, and its universal dissoluteness, left small place for domesticity. Some of the most beautiful characters in the early history of the Church are Christian women (Nonna, Monica, Anthusa); from the bosom of Christian homes came some of the most distinguished teachers of the Church—Origen, Gregory, Chrysostom, Augustine, Theodoret, etc. Moreover, in purifying the home, Christianity took the first step to a regeneration of general society; for, without pure morals in the home, how shall we look for pure morals in the State?

There is no institution with which the teachings of Christianity are more fundamentally at variance than that of *slavery*. The Christian Church, therefore, from the first took up the cause of the slave. It did not begin by preaching a general crusade against slavery, which, in the then existing condition of society, would only have provoked a revolution, and probably have done more harm than good. But it internally transformed the condition of the slave, and, by urging its own truths and principles, slowly but surely undermined the system. The impulse to emancipation was soon felt. Hermes, a Prefect of Rome, under Trajan, gave his 1,250 slaves their liberty, and means to gain a livelihood, on the day of their baptism;[1] Chromatius, another Prefect of Rome, in the reign of Diocletian, freed 1,400 slaves,

[1] Cf. Schmidt, p. 226.

who had become Christians, saying: "Those who have become the children of God ought to be no longer the slaves of men." There are many similar examples.[1]

A word only can be spared for the remaining point to which attention was directed—the restoration by Christianity of the idea of the *dignity of labour*. This was another idea by the introduction of which Christianity counterworked slavery. Early Christianity did not preach the rights of labour; it preached the duty of labour. Its boundless charity was saved from harm by the companion principle, that if a man would not work, neither should he eat. Efforts were made to render the poor capable of work, and to put them in a position to earn their own livelihood. Thus, observes Mr. Brace, "throughout the Roman Empire a grand rehabilitation of labour began under Christianity, which has never ceased. Work became honoured under the new religion. The Christian *ecclesiae* became little fraternities of free labour and competitors of the great slave-estates."[2] With full justice may the Gospel claim to have inaugurated the modern industrial era.

These hints may perhaps suffice to show the nature of the forces through which Christianity won its triumphs in the early centuries. Much might be said of subordinate causes, as, e.g., the firm organization of the Christian Church—a true *imperium in imperio*. But this was of gradual growth, and the extent, compactness, and vigour of the organization

[1] *Ibid.* Brace properly calls attention to the fact that "the Christians dried up another source of slavery by steadily and consistently opposing the abandonment and exposure of children" (*Gesta Christi*, p. 68).

[2] Page 69.

are rather indications of the hold the Church had already gained, than causes of its progress. It is to be said of the Early Church that it owed much to the great and truly good men who were its leaders—its bishops like Ignatius, and Polycarp, and Irenaeus, and even Cyprian—but these men themselves were trophies of the grace of God. It must be acknowledged, too, that less spiritual methods of propagation were sometimes employed, as in Gregory's mistaken policy in Pontus of converting heathen festivals into Christian celebrations ;[1] and that, when the Church grew more prosperous, worldly and impure elements were found in it. We see this in the pictures given us of the Churches in Carthage and Alexandria ;[2] in the defections at the persecutions ; in the evils unveiled in the Spanish Church by the canons of the Council of Elvira.[3] It is evident, however, that the wealthy and worldly do not flock into a Church till it has already become popular : the very degeneration implies a previous state of higher purity. These things are not the causes of the Church's success, but an effect of it. The bare fact that the Church came through the storm of Diocletian persecution as it did, and, by the sheer heroism of suffering, forced the recognition of its claims upon the Empire, shows how sound the kernel must have been.

The lesson we would draw from this survey for our

[1] Cf. Harnack, *Expansion*, ii. pp. 350–3. Harnack admits : " Gregory is the sole missionary we know of during these first three centuries, who employed such methods." The statement of his biographer that Gregory found only seventeen Christians in his native town and neighbourhood must be taken *cum grano*. Harnack himself notices the testimony of Lucian that Pontus was " full of atheists and Christians " more than half a century before.

[2] By Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria.

[3] Cf. Harnack ii. pp. 441–3.

own arduous task in extending the Gospel in the world, and seeking for it victory in society, may be stated in a sentence. It is not in getting a new Gospel, but in learning to understand better the Gospel that we have—in learning *really* to understand, use, preach, and apply it—that the hope of the world lies. "Unto Him that loved us, and loosed us from our sins by His blood . . . to Him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen." [1] "By this sign conquer."

[1] Rev. i. 5, 6.

VI

The Influence of the Christian Church upon the Roman Empire

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ARGUMENT.

INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS.

I. The Influence of the Church and of Christianity not Identical.

II. The Church had only very Restricted Authority in the Empire.
(*a*) The heritage into which it came.
(*b*) Shortness of the time.
(*c*) The Church never established.
(*d*) Too late to avert the ruin of the Empire.

III. Disadvantage of Confining our Thoughts to a Limited Period.

IV. Can a State ever be Christianized ?

THE WAYS IN WHICH THE CHURCH AFFECTED THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE EMPIRE.

I. *In the Realm of Ideas.*

Sociality of Christianity as Contrasted with (*a*) the Religions and (*b*) the Philosophies of the Empire.

The Teaching of the Church regarding (*a*) Equality; (*b*) Liberty; (*c*) Fraternity.

II. *In the Sphere of Conduct.*

(1) In the Church—
Communism—Philanthropy—Democracy.

(2) In the Monasteries—
Withdrawal from the world not absolute—Within the monasteries there was comradeship.

(3) In the World—
(*a*) How did Christians regard the Empire ?
(*b*) How far did Christians abstain from public and civic duties ?
(*c*) Did Christianity affect the laws of the Empire ?

VI

The Influence of the Christian Church upon the Roman Empire

In considering the social influence of the Christian Church upon the Roman Empire, it is specially desirable to keep in mind the wider and more correct use of the word "social." It is possible so to limit its meaning as to neglect important aspects of the Church's influence, and come away from our study with a sense of disappointment. We are so accustomed to regard "the social question" as an economic and legislative one, that we are in danger of neglecting some of the most important influences which affect social sentiment, social custom, and social life. I hope before the close of this Essay to show that the influence of the Church even upon legislation was by no means slight; but I wish also to suggest, if not fully to prove (for only a small fraction of the evidence can be dealt with), that even if the Church did comparatively little to Christianize the instrument of Government and prevent the ruin of the old régime, it nevertheless rendered an incalculable benefit to the social life of the world which then was and to the world which was to be. But there are some preliminary remarks which ought to be made.

I. The Influence of Christianity and the Influence of

the Church are not the same. The Church as an organized society or group of societies may only have embodied very imperfectly at any one period the Christianity of Christ and His apostles. Both by defect and excess its influence may be somewhat different from the influence of Christianity. Some part of the original message and some element of its original power may be wanting; or on the other hand foreign elements may have been introduced which tend to counteract and neutralize its influence. The question, "What is the religion of Christ?" is by no means so easy as the celebrated character in one of Fielding's novels found it—"When I mention religion I mean the Christian religion, and not only the Christian religion but the Protestant religion, and not only the Protestant religion but the religion of the Church of England"—but I should think that hardly any one would wish to identify in all points the religion of Churchmen in the second, third, fourth and fifth centuries with the religion of the New Testament. Before, then, we criticize Christianity for its failure or small success in any direction, we must know whether Christianity has ever been brought to bear upon the social life of the time at the necessary point. Something like Christianity has been before the world and operating upon society in every generation since the first; but before we confess the powerlessness of Christianity to solve all social problems and extinguish social evils we must be sure that it has been before the world in all its fullness and purity, and allow it time. Some Churchmen may not even have been Christians at all, and certainly the best of Churchmen were not perfect Christians. The representation of Christianity, e.g., which confronted the empire in the last generation

before the capture of Rome by the Goths contained elements which must seem to many quite alien from the pure Christianity of Christ—magic, divination, sacerdotalism, the medicinal lie, intolerance, asceticism, monasticism and so forth.

II. Almost equally important, though from another point of view, is the fact that during our period the Church never rose to the place of absolute authority in the counsels of the Empire. During the larger part of the time it was a proscribed society, despised and persecuted. It could hardly be expected to influence very powerfully, along the line of its own desires, the social policy of persecuting emperors. And when with the conversion of Constantine it seemed to get its opportunity, it was very far from obtaining the determining voice in the affairs of the State. For consider for a moment these things, each of which must be dismissed in a few lines.

(*a*) The heritage into which it came. The reforming party, if such we may regard either the Church, or Constantine and his Christian friends, was in a hopeless minority. Beugnot estimated that the heathen population of the empire at the accession of Constantine was still nineteen-twentieths of the whole. But if we put the Christian element at one-tenth instead of one-twentieth, the difficulty of transforming the Roman empire by means of legislation will still appear almost insuperable. What could the one-tenth have done against the nine-tenths, even if they had been social enthusiasts? We know something about the difficulties of legislation in advance of public sentiment in our own country. If total prohibitionists constituted only one-tenth of the population, could they succeed in making effective a total prohibition law, even if it found its way into the

statute book? But the drinking habits of our country are not more difficult to change than the gladiatorial games of ancient Rome. The latter were quite as much a factor in national life, as inveterate and apparently as indispensable as alcoholic drinking is with us. When we remember the determined stand the early Church took against that crying evil of the Roman empire, we may be led to ask whether the modern Church is as free from blame in reference to the debasing customs of English society.

Conservatism in Rome was a far more powerful and mischievous thing than it is in England. There was no power of initiation, no hope, no idea of progress, in ancient paganism. The people had surrendered one after another their democratic sentiments as well as privileges. They wanted only to be fed and amused by the State and live in idleness. The extension of the franchise did not mean any increased interest on the part of the people in the government of the Empire. The decay of public spirit is noticeable as early as the reign of Tiberius. The noblest Romans, such as Symmachus, towards the close of the Empire, when the barbarians were threatening its existence, would not sacrifice themselves to the extent of allowing their serfs to enlist in the army. Their worship of the past made them oblivious to the needs of the present. The changelessness of the present order, the eternity of Rome, was the one influential article in their creed.

(*b*) Then how short was the time in which the Church was able to exert its influence. In less than a hundred years after Christianity became a tolerated religion, Alaric and his Goths had entered Rome. Rome had fallen. And during all those hundred years the northern nations were pressing upon the frontiers,

and settling within the empire. The population of the empire was changing rapidly; the limits of the empire were contracting. It was a time of public danger, and such times are never favourable for social legislation.

It may of course be said in reply to this argument that the Christian emperors and the Christian bishops found time for theological controversies and for legislation in favour of the clergy and the Church: and some may wish that all the heat spent in violent controversy had been directed to the passing and enforcement of better laws for the people. But the two things were not at all on the same level as regards practical politics, whatever may have been their relative importance. Constantine and his sons chose the line of least resistance in concentrating so much of their attention upon theological matters, and the later emperors found it much easier to issue persecuting edicts against the pagans than to put a stop to the games, or to reform the barbarous finances of the empire. As a matter of fact the pagans in many instances do not seem to have cared very much about the closing of their temples, but the curtailment of their pleasures was a much more serious thing. Constantius, Gratian and Arcadius all found it perilous to interfere with the amusements of the people.

(*c*) Then we have to remember that the Church was never in the proper sense established. The advisers of Christian emperors were for the most part heathen, and, what was equally important, the administration was in the hands very largely of heathen men who could prevent or render difficult the perfect administration of the laws. The Empire was never Christianized in the sense of being officered by Chris-

tian men. De Broglie[1] goes so far as to say that with the exception of Ambrose all the favourites of the emperors in the fourth century were "enemies of the truth," i.e. heathen or Arian. And we cannot help regarding it as a most noteworthy if not deplorable fact that the one man who better than any one else might have guided the social policy of the time, the great Athanasius, "the jurisconsult Athanasius," as Sulpicius Severus calls him, was three times exiled by Christian emperors. Probably Athanasius by the firm stand which he took for the freedom of the Church, as well as by his vindication of Christian truth, did more for his own and other ages than he would have done as a jurisconsult or social reformer in happier times; but it is not to be wondered at, after his own experience of the tyranny of kings and the time-serving of bishops, that when he turned his thoughts to social problems he should have leaned towards the monastic life.

(*d*) And, finally, it should be remarked in this connexion that when the Church arrived at a position of power in the State, so far as she did do so, it was too late to avert the ruin of the Empire. "It is one of the most tragical facts of all history," said J. S. Mill "that Constantine rather than Marcus Aurelius was the first Christian emperor. It is a bitter thought how different the Christianity of the world might have been had it been adopted as the religion of the Empire under the auspices of Marcus Aurelius instead of those of Constantine."[2] Modern historians do not all take such a favourable view of the political sagacity of Marcus Aurelius as Gibbon did; but as regards the time, it is interesting to try and imagine

[1] *L'Eglise et l'Empire romain au IV^me^ Siècle*, vol. iv. Resumé.

[2] *Essay on Liberty*, p. 58.

what a Christian Emperor like Constantine might have done, if he had had the chance which the Stoic Marcus Aurelius had a century and a half before. The empire as reformed by Diocletian was already past redemption. The Church might hasten or retard its end, but it could not avert it.

III. The influence of Christianity can never be fully estimated by confining our thoughts to a single limited period. The work of the Church, like the work of Jeremiah, is " to pluck up and to break down, and to destroy and to overthrow," as well as to build and to plant. The destruction of the Roman Empire was necessary for the progress of the race ; and though the chief actors in the scene little realized how this was to come about, and would have resisted it with all their might if they had done so, yet the purpose of God was accomplished through them. Wishing only to build and to plant, i.e. to maintain the stability of the empire, the Church found that it had also to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to overthrow. The question is, did the Church while so doing prepare the way for a better time ? Did it mediate between Roman and the Barbarian ? Did it preserve what was best in the old Roman civilization ? Receiving a new spirit and principles calculated to produce better social conditions, did it hand them down faithfully to succeeding generations ? The prophets of Judah did not succeed in creating an ideal city by cleansing Jerusalem of its abominations : but they did a work whose influence is felt to-day. Can we say the same of the teachers and workers in the early Church ? Even if they did not succeed in applying the Gospel in the wisest ways to every phase of life in their day, did they deliver and transmit a Gospel capable of transforming the world ?

IV. There is one other preliminary question—Can a State ever be Christianized, not nominally, but in the sense of becoming permeated by the spirit and principles of Jesus Christ? Is there not something in the very constitution of a State which prevents the perfect application of Christian morality? How can a society governed by force illustrate the principles of the Sermon on the Mount? It is an old question, but one also that is ever with us, and never more persistently than now. There are many in our day who incline towards a very high doctrine of the State, conceding to it an authority, prerogative and function, which they would deny to any organized Church. There are others on the contrary who make much more modest claims for the State, and believe, among other things, that it can never be a perfect embodiment, nor even a proper instrument, of the Kingdom of Heaven.

There is no occasion here, however, to discuss rival theories of the State, its functions or its possibilities, inasmuch as what we have now to deal with is simply the Roman Empire: and whatever may be true of other forms of government we may believe that the Roman Empire could not be Christianized. A despotism of the Oriental type can never afford ideal conditions, social, material, or industrial. Ambrose was nearer the truth when he said that the Church was the outward form of justice.[1] Liberty and justice were impossible in the empire of his day. And of course the larger question of the possibility of Christianizing any State lies in the background of our thoughts.

But we must now confine our attention to positive results. In what apparent and conspicuous ways

[1] *De Officiis*, i. 29, 139.

did the Church affect the social life of the empire?

I. And first in the realm of ideas, where all great victories have first to be won, what did the Church achieve? Most important of all—it maintained against all rival theories and beliefs the social conception of God received from Christ and His apostles. It attacked the anti-social, unsocial, and imperfectly social ideas of God which it found prevalent in the empire, and substituted something better in their place. It saw one after another of those imperfectly social, or even mischievous ideas retire into the background, and make way for the Christian idea of which it was the guardian and interpreter. That was the first and the greatest victory of the Church. Men are not likely to be better than their gods. Their social ideals stand in close connexion with their religious beliefs. No nation can change its gods without changing very much besides.

Now what was there of social efficiency in the religious ideas which Christianity resisted and to so large an extent displaced?

The old gods of Latium were intimately connected in the minds of their worshippers with the fortunes of the State. They were the gods of the nation, and to neglect their worship was to involve the nation in disaster. But the old Roman idea of religion was essentially magical, commercial and selfish. The gods were to be appeased by sacrifices and made to do what the worshipper desired. It was a question of contract and the fulfilment of contract, not of fellowship between the worshipper and his god. Religion had nothing to do with morality. The action of the deity did not extend to the thoughts and desires of the heart. Man might be dependent upon the gods for his daily bread, but he was dependent upon him-

self alone for his morals. Such intercourse as there might be between the gods and man was concerned with the outward fortunes of the individual or the State. The inadequacy of these ideas was felt as time went on, and the Eastern cults came in to minister to the deeper needs of men. The ideas of brotherhood with men and fellowship with God, which found no place in the old religion, did find some expression in these Oriental religions. It was the fact of their greater sociality which accounted for their rapid success. Mithraism, e.g., could never have been the dangerous rival to Christianity which it must have seemed had it not provided a real brotherhood, and promised union with God. The victory of Christianity over Mithraism was the victory of a superior form of Socialism over an inferior form. Mithraism was defeated on its own ground. The religion which promised most and could accomplish most for society was the one which survived. In the third century Mithraism probably numbered its adherents by millions. It had established itself in nearly every part of the Roman empire. It was the religion of the men who ruled the empire, i.e. to say of the soldiers. But where is it to-day? What monuments has it left behind it? Nothing practically but monuments of stone. In the expressive words of Dr. Rendel Harris, "It is not merely that Mithraism is dead, but there are no *gesta Mithrae*; there never were any." [1]

And why was Mithraism, which seemed to promise so much, so socially ineffective? It would be easy for the sociologist to point to glaring defects, such as the exclusion of women from its privileges and its severe and imperfect view of human nature, but behind all these surface defects there is a radically

[1] *Aaron's Breastplate*, p. 139.

unsocial view of God. The Divine is the ethereal and non-human. Man must first divest himself of those things which are most properly his, before he can enter into the blessedness of heaven.

The old gods of Latium having been found wanting, military and other Eastern cults having lost their hold upon the more earnest minds in the Empire, nothing remained but the apotheosis of the Emperor and the worship of the *Dea Roma*. But a State which worships itself is morally dead. The vision has gone and the people have perished.

Still, there was philosophy, if not religion: did not that, we may ask, keep alive a social ideal worthy of a great empire? Aristotle begins his Politics by telling us that man is a political animal, and that he who by nature and not by accident is without a State is either above humanity or below it. That means that the State exhausts the possibilities of human development: man is only man because he finds a place in the State. Concerning man as a member of an eternal order, and the State as the sphere in which God is training men for a higher life, Aristotle has nothing to say. God is non-moral and unsocial. He does not interfere with mankind. The highest virtues consequently are intellectual, not moral. Aristocratic, abstract, unsocial, the ideal of Aristotle was powerless to effect any social reform. It was so with Epicurus. The gods did not trouble themselves with the affairs of men: it was foolish therefore for a man to live for any one but himself, or take any part in civic concerns. Platonism and Neoplatonism were likewise unfit to introduce a higher social order, because the highest ideal in the one case was aristocratic, intellectual, and unhuman: in the other absolutely non-human. In the case of Stoicism alone can it

be said that the ideal has even the appearance of being a social one, and the fact that the legislation of the Stoic jurisconsults compares in some points favourably with that of Christian emperors makes the resemblances and differences of the greatest interest.

Stoicism did possess a social ideal; it conceived of its god as being in closest relations with men. It was the old tribal idea of God, with humanity substituted for the tribe. Gods and men formed one commonwealth; men were partakers of the divine nature. This community of gods and men was not to be identified with the State. Foiled in his attempts to serve the earthly state, the wise man, says Seneca, may remember that he belongs to a greater commonwealth whose bounds are only to be measured by the circuit of the sun, where he will not work in vain, or rather meditate in vain.[1] This social ideal is incomparably higher than that of Aristotle. Not only is the State cosmopolitan and not Greek; not only are all men, even slaves, admitted into citizenship in the earthly kingdom, but over and beyond this there is the greater commonwealth of gods and men. There is an ideal as well as a cosmopolitan element in the Stoicism of Seneca which seems to promise much. And yet Stoicism failed to influence permanently the fortunes of the empire. Stoicism was much more closely allied with the empire than Christianity. It was an essentially Roman philosophy. It had a far more favourable, because earlier, chance of remedying by legislation the evils of the empire than Christianity had. Yet Marcus Aurelius does not inaugurate a brighter period for his people; he closes the golden age of Roman history, the age which

[1] *De Otio*, iv.

before all other ages in the history of the world Gibbon thought was the happiest to have lived in.

We shall misinterpret Stoicism if we put it on the same level as Christianity for social outlook and effectiveness. The differences are much greater than the resemblances. The Stoic community of gods and men, by merging the human and the divine, by confining the divine within the limits of a commonwealth homogeneous in all its parts, shuts out God from all effective action upon the world as fatally as the cold isolation of Aristotle's deity. God is imprisoned in His own universe. He is man's equal, morally perhaps his inferior, but constitutionally his equal. He is not the giver of grace to men, for man shares already what God possesses, save immortality, and this God never imparts. He is not the giver of virtue, for man is the author of his own salvation. And as there is no transference of moral power from God to man, so man cannot possibly influence his neighbour on the higher side of his nature. Each man is sufficient in himself. A man should indeed love his neighbour, and a very able writer in a recent work on Stoicism, has used the peculiarly Christian phrase, "enthusiasm of humanity," to describe Stoic philanthropy, but we must remember that the love of the Stoic was the love of one who denied the rights of the affections and emotions. It was without passion and without hope. It was without hope either for the individual or for the earthly commonwealth. Stoic eschatology will not bear comparison with Christian. The aimlessness of the one is in strong contrast to the progressive and final character of the other. The Golden Age for the Stoic was in the past rather than in the future. But a social reformation is impossible without hope. The Christian had been begotten

again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and in Jesus Christ had found a life of fellowship with God and man which was impossible before. But the Stoic's faith was self-centred. It was in himself. And the outlook was dark and uncertain.

Before passing away from the realm of ideas to more concrete illustrations something may be said regarding the three democratic, republican and socialistic ideas of Equality, Liberty and Fraternity as held in the early Church. The revolution which Christianity wrought in the Roman Empire cannot be understood if we ignore this part of our subject.

(*a*) Equality. Christianity asserted the absolute equality of all human beings in the sight of God. The early Church, confronted by very different ideas on the subject in the Roman Empire, in Gnosticism as well as in heathenism, set itself resolutely to bring public sentiment on to its side.

And, first, with regard to the child. From the first and consistently the Church championed the cause of the child. From its very birth and even before birth the infant was a being with sacred rights which it was both crime and sin to violate. Infanticide, a practice concerning which the ancient world was so callous that the author of the fine saying "I am a man, I count nothing human to be foreign to me," did not see the inconsistency of being enraged with his wife for refusing to destroy their infant daughter with her own hand. To the Church and to the Church almost exclusively belongs the honour of securing the natural rights of the child. Before the middle of the third century a similar spirit had made itself felt in Stoic circles, and the jurisconsult Paulus characterized

infanticide as murder. But the general Stoic attitude is best seen in Epictetus, who regards children as "snivelling brats" beneath the notice of the wise man.[1]

Then with regard to Woman. In theory, according to Boissier,[2] the Church treated women badly enough, accusing them of weakness and vanity. "What do these miserable women want, laden with sins, turned about in all directions by opinions, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth?" said Jerome. Yet even Jerome must not be taken too seriously. The ladies were his favourite pupils. They were to be educated as carefully as men. They might read Cyprian, Athanasius, Hilary, and—climax of all generous concessions—they might learn Hebrew. And this view of the sinfulness of the feminine nature is only one side of the picture. Her social inferiority was sometimes regarded as due to the fact that the woman was the first to sin. But Ambrose, e.g., will not allow that she was the sole cause of the Fall, and says that if man were the stronger he ought to have resisted the temptation more easily.[3] Moreover salvation had come into the world through her. "The Saviour gives abundant proof of the dignity of woman in being born of a woman," said Augustine.[4] And in the school of Christ all were alike disciples. Justin Martyr held that God had given to women equally with men the ability to keep the whole law[5]. Tatian said that Christians admitted women to the pursuit of philosophy, all in fact who desired to hear, even old

[1] Bigg, *Church's Task under the Roman Empire*, p. 70.
[2] *La Fin du Paganisme*, iv. 2, 4.
[3] *De Instit. Virgin.*, 4. 25.
[4] *Sermo*, 190.
[5] *Trypho*, 25.

women and striplings, persons of every age and sex.[1] "The virtue of man and woman," said Clement of Alexandria "is the same. For if the God of both is one, the Master of both is also one; one Church, one temperance, one modesty; their food is common, marriage an equal yoke; respiration, sight, hearing, knowledge, hope, obedience, love, all alike. And those whose life is common have common grace and a common salvation: common to them are love and training."[2] Chrysostom said, "They surpass us in love to the Saviour, in chastity, in compassion for the miserable."[3]

Sentiments such as these could not be held in every part of the empire from Carthage to the furthest East without profoundly modifying the social life of the empire. A vassal, often honoured and respected, but always dependent upon the will of father, husband or son, in the days of the Republic; a freedwoman, often cruel and degraded, but always the victim of her own caprice or passion, emancipated yet not free, in the days of the empire; it was only in the school of Christ that woman received her freedom and entered into a life of perfect liberty.

With regard to slavery, Harnack is no doubt right in saying "It is a mistake to suppose that any slave question occupied the early Church."[4] Slavery was an institution of such long standing and so widespread that any direct attack upon it would have been disastrous to all concerned, to the slaves themselves and to society at large, as well as to the slaveowners. The very existence of society depended upon slave labour. If abolished, it could only be abolished very gradually. Both Stoicism and Christianity however

[1] *Cohort*, 32 and 33. [2] *Paedag*, i. 4. [3] *Hom.* 42.
[4] *Expansion of Christianity*, i. 3, 7.

had much to say upon the subject. They both regarded it as unnatural, and contrary to primitive custom. At the beginning it was not so, but like divorce under the Mosaic law, it was allowed because of the hardness of men's hearts. It was an accommodation to a corrupt state of society. According to Seneca it was unnecessary in the age of innocence. According to the Church writers it was a result of the Fall. But the Church writers were able to look upon it with greater calmness and hopefulness than the Stoics. As it was due to sin, that is to the will of man, it was not necessary; and as it was allowed by God, it must be for some holy and gracious purposes. It was a punishment for sin, and a discipline for the sake of righteousness. To Seneca it naturally seemed a thing utterly hateful,[1] though even according to Stoic doctrine the wise man might rise superior to its bitterness and be free though in bonds. To the Christian it seemed a temporary ordinance of God, to be dissolved only by mutual consent, and while it lasted an opportunity, not to be missed, for glorifying God. It may require an effort of the imagination to conceive the heightened sense of dignity which the consciousness of union with Jesus Christ in the new life gave to men in those early days, which led them to work cheerfully and suffer uncomplainingly in bonds, and even for the sake of the Gospel to sell themselves into slavery as Clement of Rome tells us some did[2]; but it was by that new sense of dignity and that new spirit, and not by any violent agitation, that slavery was undermined. It

[1] The best treatment (in English) of slavery in the early Church perhaps is in vol. I. of A. J. Carlyle's *Mediaeval Political Theory in the West*, iii. 8, 9 and 10.

[2] 1 Ep. chap. 55.

was to the new-found liberty of men in Christ Jesus, with the consequent respect it inspired, rather than to the Stoic doctrine of the natural equality of men, that the world owed the mitigation and partial abolition of slavery.

Other social inequalities were also transcended in the thought of the early Church. Poverty ceased to be regarded as necessarily a crime, disgrace, or disadvantage. The Church became the recognized champion of the poor. This was as true of the Gentile Churches as of the Jewish. A recent writer has, indeed, spoken of the Jewish-Christian Churches as constituting the "radical social wing of the primitive Church," and of the social spirit which glowed in that part of the Church as "inadequately represented in the main current of Christian life which finally resulted in Catholic Christianity." [1] If by "radical" is meant lawless and revolutionary there may be truth in the observation. The Sibylline books, some of which emanated from Jewish-Christian sources, breathe a spirit of hostility to the existing order of a very violent kind. But radicalism is not necessarily of a violent or anarchical character. The type of socialism represented by such Jewish Christians as James was very different from that which found favour among some of the wilder spirits of Alexandria, and there seems to be no reason why it should be considered more "radical" than that of Paul. A sympathy with the poor as intense and as practical as that shown by James glowed in the heart of Paul; and that kind of sympathy, the Christian rather than the Sibylline, fortunately did prevail "in the main current of Christian life which finally resulted in Catholic Christianity." Some of the Catholic writers

[1] Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, p. 101.

are as outspoken as James himself against oppression by the rich, and these denunciations were accompanied by appropriate works. Again it appears that a higher form of socialism survived a lower; and one reason for the disappearance of Jewish Christianity, which some writers deplore, may have been its failure to remain where James had left it, and its alliance with a more violent (though not more radical) type of social theory.

(*b*) With regard to the second of the democratic ideas, that of Liberty, it is hardly possible to exaggerate the service the early Church rendered to mankind before the fall of the empire. It was the constancy of the confessors and martyrs that forced the idea of toleration on to the attention of men. Individual conviction, first an object of wonder, then of scorn, finally became the strongest force with which the Roman emperors had to reckon. Even Stoicism, though professing to hold in honour the manhood of every man, threw itself blindly against the Christian sentiment and called the Christian's conduct "obstinacy." Rationalism joined the alliance of Superstition with Despotism and attempted to crush the only Faith which had within it the promise of civil and religious liberty. But it failed. Christianity triumphed over the combined assault, and its victory marked the beginning of a new era and of a new world.

The victory was not of course at once complete. The conflict was again and again renewed. The leaders of the Church were not always true to the principles for which Apologists like Tertullian and Lactantius had contended and in obedience to which the martyrs had died. That those principles made any headway at all against the powerful currents that resisted them is a splendid tribute to their own inherent

strength and to the heroism of the men who held them. The essential thing to notice is that ideas of liberty utterly foreign to the philosophy of Plato or of Cicero had laid hold of the minds of men and were getting themselves applied in various directions.

(*c*) It was so with the idea of Fraternity. Brotherhoods were not unknown in the ancient world. There were many in the Roman Empire. But Christianity gave a new meaning and a new sanction to the idea of brotherhood. "Thus we love one another, because we do not know how to hate," said Minucius Felix, "Thus we call one another brethren as being born of one God and Father, comrades in faith and fellow-heirs in hope." [1] "Thou shalt not call things thine own: for if ye are partakers in common of things which are incorruptible how much more of things which are corruptible." [2] It is "divine religion, which alone effects that man should hold man dear, and should know that he is bound to him by the tie of brotherhood, since God is alike a Father to all." [3] Passages like these abound in rich profusion throughout the writings of the period, and reveal the twofold way in which the brotherhood of men was regarded. At the foundation of all lies the universal Fatherhood of God: men are brethren all the world over, because created by the One God. But it was the fellowship of faith and hope and love in the Gospel of Jesus Christ that gave its peculiar charm and its peculiar power to the Christian brotherhood. The Fatherhood of God meant much more to the Christian than to the philosophers, but it was the consciousness of the new life in Christ which converted theory into practice and produced

[1] Oct. 31. [2] Barnabas, chap. 19.
[3] Lactantius *Div. Inst.*, v. 7.

"the insatiable desire for doing good" of which Clement of Rome speaks.[1]

II

It is now time to look at some of the attempts which the early Church made to apply these ideas.

The first efforts of the Church, then, were directed to forming a society independent of the State in which the social ideas of Christianity could be more perfectly applied. The origins of that society are clearly seen in the New Testament, and the pictures of primitive Church life there given reveal the astonishing power which the new faith had to create a higher social life than the world had ever known. Surely all things in the way of social reform were possible to that faith. The enthusiastic type of Communism may be compared with the other social phenomenon described in the same chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, the Gift of Tongues; for just as the latter sign indicated the unifying socializing power of the Gospel in one direction so the former did in another. Language and property represent two great hindrances in the way of a perfect mutual understanding and intercourse. These hindrances are done away in Christ. The one can be Christianized as perfectly as the other.

We are in the habit of regarding this Pentecostal experience and its outcome as something exceptional in the life of the early Church, confined to Jerusalem and attended with very dubious results. The subsequent poverty of the Church at Jerusalem has even

[1] 1 Ep. chap. ii. For further illustrations the English reader should consult the valuable works of Lecky and Schmidt. Brace's *Gesta Christi* is not so good. Croslegh's *Christianity Judged by its Fruits*, and Storr's *Divine Origin of Christianity* may also be mentioned.

been ascribed to it. We may leave that alone. But what is specially important to note is that in theory and principle the Communism was not exceptional. The new Christian theory of property—"not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own"—is one which we find constantly adopted and applied in the new society. The consecration of property to the common weal is one of the fundamental principles of the new Church life, and one which the teachers of the Church are never tired of insisting upon. A long catena of passages, from the *Didaché* which says "Thou shalt share all things with thy brother" to Augustine and Pelagius who both regarded poverty as better than riches, could very easily be given, and would abundantly prove the contention that all Churchmen believed that naught which the Christian possessed was his own, but that he was bound to surrender it or to use it for the common good. Against any theory of State Communism or compulsory Communism the Church writers would have unanimously protested. The immorality of Plato's Republic, e.g., was pitilessly exposed by Lactantius, who said that the ownership of property contains the material both of vices and of virtues, but a community of goods contains nothing else than the licentiousness of vices: Covetousness, not private property, was the cause of the evils of society.[1]

Private ownership was not abolished in the Church, but every encouragement was offered to voluntary giving to the point of self-sacrifice and even consequent poverty. Clement of Alexandria, who believed in the use and not in the total surrender of property, nevertheless held that to reduce one's wants to a minimum

[1] *Div. Instit.* iii. 22. The references here and elsewhere will be found in the "Ante-Nicene Christian Library."

was a social duty, and Augustine, though he recognized in opposition to Pelagius the right of earthly property, looked upon it in very much the same way as he did upon the institution of slavery. It was good to conquer the love of money, but it was better to add works to the inward victory.

The liberality of the Church is too evident on every hand to need illustration, and it showed itself in a great variety of ways. In the middle of the third century the Roman Church supported 1,500 poor persons. In cases of emergency Ambrose, Augustine and others parted with the vases and ornaments of the Church to help the unfortunate. The legend says that Paulinus of Nola sold himself into slavery to redeem a young man the only son of a widowed mother. Basil turned a part of the town of Neo-Caesarea into a colony of mercy with an asylum for the aged, a hospital for the sick, a home for children, and an inn for travellers. In times of plague Christians ministered to the dying who had been basely deserted by their pagan friends. All this charitable work was well-known to the heathen and cannot have been without its influence in changing public sentiment in the empire. Even the Stoics who despised the Christians for their obstinacy and want of reason may have learnt something from these object lessons. Men sometimes do learn from the people they profess to despise ; only generally they do not acknowledge their obligations. Some of the laws which heathen emperors put upon the statute-book may have been suggested by Christian examples. When we come to Julian we know that something of this kind did take place. " It has happened," he said, " that the indifference of our priests for the poor has suggested to the impious Galileans the thought of practical beneficence. . . .

It would be shameful when the Jews have not a beggar, when the impious Galileans nourish both ours and theirs that those of our cult should be deprived of the succour which we ought to give them." So he told his priests to bestir themselves.

But these forms of practical charity did not exhaust the sociality of the ancient Church. Work was provided as well as alms. Teaching was given. Opportunities of social intercourse were afforded. Even after the Church had modelled itself only too closely on the imperial lines, the democratic spirit of the earliest age could not be quenched. The people could elect their own bishops, though they may not have been supposed to nominate them. And those bishops were their friends. They championed the cause of the poor. They intervened in case of disputes. They resisted their oppressors. And so great was the popularity and moral authority of their voluntary tribunals that at the end of the fourth century the Emperor Arcadius passed two laws which made the sentences of the bishops legal. When attacked by the barbarians, bishops like Sidonius and Synesius defended their flocks and proved themselves better patriots than the heathen nobles. And over and above all these advantages of a temporal kind there was community in the deepest things. It is no wonder that the Church was more popular than the State. It was accomplishing many of the things which the empire had failed to do. It was doing much which the empire had never attempted. And the fact that the Church in later times fell lamentably short of the ideal formed by men like Ambrose, and Martin of Tours, and other bishops, and showed that tyranny was not confined to civil governments, is no reason why we should refuse to acknowledge the splendid social service which it

rendered during this period in protecting the weak and in affording a sphere in which the individual could come into possession of his own.

But what about Monasticism? Was this a gain to the Roman Empire? It is one thing to say that a contented, happy, fellowship of Christians such as we see depicted for example in the Apology of Aristides, "a document so altogether altruistic in its ethics and disclosing a people so utterly happy in the faith into which they had been brought that one might have blushed to find the difference between their spiritual temper and our own"—it is one thing to say that such a fellowship, in the world and yet not of it, must have been a good thing in itself and also for the world; but we may hesitate before saying that the monastic life which was so popular at the end of our period was good either for the men who fled from the world, or for the world from which they fled.

But some things ought to be remembered.

Monasticism is not Christian, though it may have been adopted by the Church from motives partly Christian. The fact that it did not make its appearance for three hundred years shows that it is no essential part of Christianity. But in the fourth century it was the spirit of the age. It arose from causes over which the Church had no control. And the Church had to reckon with it. Some of the leaders resisted the movement, but the greater number yielded to it and tried to utilize it, just as our Churches today try to be "up to the times" and take advantage of any strong current of public opinion.

Another thing—the whole Church did not become monasticized. Monasticism became a sort of Church within the Church, and even this monastic section did

not break wholly with the world. Many of the monks for good and ill continued to take a living interest in the world they had renounced. They even graced marriage ceremonies by their presence. They instituted something similar to our Pleasant Saturday Evenings. The monasteries too were often homes of learning: they were centres of charity: they were sources from which evangelistic missions proceeded: they were labour colonies and, to mention social influence of another kind, we cannot forget that it was from this class, whichwe, from our modern standpoint, are inclined to regard as altogether mischievous, that a social wrong which had defied all the efforts of pagan and Christian emperors received its deathblow. It was not by legislation, but by the noble act of a monk that the gladiatorial shows were stopped.

For those within the monasteries the social life was far from being an ideal one; still it was at least a social life. The rights of the individual were respected. Men met one another, men rich and poor, noble and serf. Equality, liberty and fraternity did find recognition within the walls of the monastery.[1] To us the monastery with its rigorous rules, and its isolation of husband and wife, seems a very imperfect substitute for the home and the relations of family life. Yet even this was easier to husband and father than to see wife and children daily dying of starvation, or sold into slavery before his eyes. The life to which they came was better than that they left behind.

But what about those left still in the world? Was not their lot made the harder by the withdrawal of so many to the monasteries? The taxes had still to be paid, public burdens had still to be borne. This

[1] See, e.g., *Genesis of the Social Conscience*, an interesting work by Prof. Nash, chaps. v. and vi.

was of course a serious evil, and the mention of it brings us to the last part of our subject, the actual participation of Christian men in the public life of the empire. Had the Christians of those days any civic conscience at all?

To answer that question we ought to consider:

(*a*) What view did they take of the social order to which they belonged, i.e. the Roman empire?

(*b*) How far did they abstain from public and civic duties?

(*c*) Did Christianity as a matter of fact succeed in changing to any extent the laws of the empire?

(*a*) Considering that the empire was so long in opposition to the Church, the almost invariable respect shown to it by Christian writers is one of the miracles of history. Persecuted and despised by the State, the Church nevertheless honoured the State, and when we remember the different spirit shown by the Jews we shall see in the peaceable spirit of the Christians a striking tribute to the presence of a new power in their midst. It was no more natural for the Christians than it would have been for the Jews to pray for their enemies, willingly to pay taxes to the Emperors who denied them liberty, and remain law-abiding citizens in a State which regarded them as outlaws. But this the power of Christ effected. The conservative attitude of Paul and 1st Peter and the Acts of the Apostles to the Roman Empire is the prevailing one: though echoes of another kind are not altogether wanting. Clement of Rome says that it was God who "gave the power of the Kingdom to our rulers and governors on the earth . . . that we might be subject to them, nought resisting Thy will." [1] Melito of Sardis speaks of the

[1] Ep. lxi.

happy beginning of the empire, and regards it as an auspicious circumstance that Christianity arose about the same time.[1]

Irenaeus says that civil governments are ordained of God though they are due to human sin.[2] Minucius Felix says "our infant empire was begotten in crime and maintained by terrorism," yet "we are not disloyal, though some of us refuse the honours of public office."[3] And time would fail to tell of Prudentius and Orosius and Ambrose and Augustine and the rest. Two more illustrations may suffice. Paulinus says—"As far as the heaven is above the earth, so great is the distance between the things of Caesar and of Christ," and yet he tells us that St. Felix, with the help of the Apostles Peter and Paul, obtained a prolongation of the Roman Empire, thus making not only the Saint, but the Apostles, responsible for the continued existence of the empire. Again, St. Jerome speaks of Rome as "Babylon," and yet exclaims, when Alaric and his Goths have sacked it, "the light of the world is quenched."

Justin Martyr occupies an interesting position in relation to this question. His broad outlook upon the world leads us to expect that he will find in human institutions as well as in human philosophies illustrations of his favourite doctrine of the Logos. Why should not the "seed of reason" spring up in the works as well as in the thoughts of men? But Justin does not develop this idea. Even the world which God has made, not aimlessly but for the sake of the human race, is no proper object of the Christian's desire. To seek a human kingdom is to deny the

[1] Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.* iv. 26. [2] v. 24, 2.
[3] *Octavius*, chaps. 25 and 31.

Saviour. To flee from those things which seem to be good is the road to blessedness. But after the Resurrection there will be a thousand years of earthly bliss for the Christian.

The influence of the millenarian hopes upon the attitude of the early Church to the world opens up a large subject, but the tendency of many writers seems to be to regard it too much as an evil thing. It is true that the expectation of the approaching end of the world produced an unrest and indisposition to work at Thessalonica and elsewhere ; but that it was on the whole an anti-social and mischievous belief it would be very difficult to prove. The enormous power of such a hope must not be judged simply by the extravagances which accompanied it in special instances, whether few or many. If sometimes it led to ecstasy and idleness, at others it led to patient continuance in well-doing, made men forget their weariness, their animosities, their differences. A living hope of any kind was of priceless value for that " hard Roman world " on which " disgust

> And secret loathing fell ;
> Deep weariness, and sated lust
> Made human life a hell.

And if the hope of Justin and others was judged too earthly by Augustine and later teachers of the Church, it had brought courage to do and bear, and added a new motive for brotherly love and mutual service. The consciousness of belonging to an eternal kingdom, whatever the particular form the Christian hope might assume, brought an increase both of sympathy and of power. Whether it led to a neglect of practical duties and civic responsibilities is a question of fact rather than of theory.

(*b*) With regard then to participation in public and civic life there is much again that should be said. If Christians held aloof during times of persecution ought we to be surprised? The wonder is all the other way. It was one of the moral victories of Christianity that its adherents did not betake themselves to the deserts three hundred years before they did actually go in their hundreds and thousands. In the second and third centuries they were still in the world, though not of it. Everything points that way; not simply the testimony of a writer like the author of the Epistle to Diognetus, who compares the presence of Christians in the world to that of the spirit within the body, but also the testimony of extreme men like Tertullian, who shows that, whatever his own particular tastes and convictions in the question might be, Christians were as a matter of fact to be found everywhere—in the army, the market place, the booth, the workshop, the inn and other places. And indeed the enemies of the Christians imply as much, as might be easily shown.

And all this time the Christian Church had not only to fulfil its social and civil duties in the face of the strongest prejudices against it, but also in direct resistance to a current in heathen society which had set strongly in an anti-social and anti-civic direction No one can deny that the Church strengthened and purified family life; and if on the other hand it may seem to have done something to discourage marriage, it was in the attempt to substitute a moral for an immoral celibacy, that is to say, at most an imperfect social ideal for one mischievously and outrageously antisocial. Or take military service. The Christians disliked it, because they fought under an idolatrous military régime, as well as because it was ideally

opposed to the Gospel. They did sometimes avoid military service. But so did the heathen, and possibly in much larger numbers, and from a very different motive. Long before the fall of the Roman Empire the demoralization of public sentiment (i.e. from the patriotic point of view) had reached such a stage that barbarians were admitted into the empire not only to finance it but to fight for it. Or take municipal duties. Christians no doubt often tried to evade the unenviable position of the *curialis*; but so did the heathen, for the honour had become an intolerable burden, a remorseless instrument for crushing out of existence the middle classes. Christians did not wish to be either the victims or the instruments of a form of tyranny which was simply ruining the State. In this respect they yielded to the prevailing dislike to accept municipal obligations. But the saying of Tertullian, "Nothing is more foreign (to the Christian) than public affairs" represents an extreme opinion and not the general practice of the early Church. Even after monasticism had become a popular movement, Augustine could say "Let those who profess that the Christian religion is hostile to the Republic give us military men, provincials, husbands, parents, sons, masters, servants, kings, judges, and administrators equal to those that Christianity has formed." [1]

(*c*) But finally did the Church succeed in influencing legislation to any considerable extent?

If we recall the observations made at the opening of this essay we shall look for indications of the mind of the Church or of the Christian emperors rather

[1] See Schmidt, *Social Results of Early Christianity*, p. 287. Harnack in *Historian's History of the World*, vol. vi., Appendix B. Ramsay, *Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 432 ff. Nash, *op. cit.*, p. 147. Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders*, ii., p. 561, etc.

in what they proposed than in what they succeeded in carrying out. Many of the laws passed must have been inoperative, and many more would no doubt have been forthcoming had there been any prospect of their being obeyed. There were however a considerable number which clearly show the new spirit which was striving to find expression in the legislature. De Broglie tells us that in seven years Constantine issued 140 edicts, in nearly all of which the new spirit of Christianity is to be seen[1]: while Dean Stanley said: "In 313 A.D. was issued the Edict of Toleration. Then followed in rapid succession the decree for the observance of Sunday in the towns of the Empire, the use of prayers for the army, the abolition of the punishment of crucifixion, the encouragement of the emancipation of slaves, the discouragement of infanticide, the prohibition of private divinations, the prohibition of licentious and cruel rites, the prohibition of gladiatorial games. Every one of these steps was a gain to the Roman Empire and to mankind such as not even the Antonines had ventured to attempt, and of these benefits none has been altogether lost."[2] These opinions may be a little too enthusiastic. The latter hardly does justice to the noble though comparatively futile efforts of some of the Roman emperors; while the former must not blind us to the unchristian character of some of the edicts of Constantine and his successors. But it is hardly appropriate in this brief essay to do more than indicate generally a few lines upon which advance was made. Among the laws which followed there were many others designed to alleviate the miseries of men. Abuses such as John

[1] *Op. cit.* I, chap. ii. and iii.
[2] *Eastern Church*, vi., p. 230.

Howard in later times brought to light in the treatment of prisoners were forbidden by various edicts. Judgment was not to be delayed beyond a definite period. Actresses were encouraged to escape from their demoralizing profession. There were laws giving to mothers the right of guardianship over their own children: laws directed against immorality and with the object of limiting divorce: and many laws which reveal a growing sympathy with the weak, the poor, and the unfortunate.

Special laws were directed against the injustice and oppression of the taxgatherers and of the rich. We can in short see most clearly that the Christian idea of government existing for the protection of the weak and of the poor had laid hold of the minds of Christian emperors. The Church through its own organizations, and in connexion with the anti-democratic and anti-Christian type of government prevailing in the empire, which frustrated its efforts at every turn, did a splendid work in alleviating poverty and distress.[1] While the State was killing the middle classes and so putting the dagger to its own bosom, the Church was at least championing the cause of the poor and mitigating the misery of the unfortunate. Many things may be laid to the charge of the Church in the first four centuries with more or less of plausibility and of justice, but the very last thing with which she can be charged with any degree of truthfulness is a want of sympathy with the poor, the helpless, and the unfortunate. Before the empire fell, the merciful spirit of the Church was reflected, not only

[1] Even Karl Kautsky says—"Though it did not abolish poverty, it was the most effective organization for alleviating the misery growing out of the general poverty within its reach." Quoted by Rauschenbusch, p. 133.

in the works of Christian authors, and in Church institutions and in Canon law, but even in the legislation of a despotic and still largely pagan State. That State had not been transformed by the Church from a despotism into a representative government, or taught political economy, or saved from the inevitable consequences of centuries of folly. But "amid all the perverse errors of legislation and the hopeless corruption of the financial service," as Dr. Dill remarks, "the central authority was keenly alive to its duties and almost overwhelmed by its responsibilities." [1] Speaking of the last emperors he says: "Almost every page of the code bears witness to the indignant energy with which the Emperor and his council strove to check the anarchy of the provincial administration. But with a high sense of duty and the appearance of omnipotence the central authority had lost control of the vast system." [2] And again—"Yet it is impossible to ignore the high sense of duty, and the almost effusive sympathy for the suffering masses which mark the last utterances of the imperial jurisprudence." [3]

That surely was no small victory for Christianity to have won. It is for Christian men to-day, having the inestimable advantage of living in a land of popular government and free institutions, which the teaching of Christianity has done much if not everything to secure for them, to act with greater devotion and with greater knowledge in the interests of the commonwealth; but it would be foolish and unjust to ignore the debt which we owe to the early Church.

[1] *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Eastern Empire*, p. 229.

[2] P. 278.

[3] P. 277.

VII

The Influence of the Christian Church on the Social and Ethical Development of the Middle Ages

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ARGUMENT.

§ I. The Fall of the Empire—The Task of the Church—A Survey of the Ruin—West Goths—Salian Franks—Vandals—Slavs—Huns —The Muslim Conquests—the Wikings—Attila and Leo—the Church and the Salvation of Civilization.

§ II. The Conquests of the Cross—The only Hope of Civilization—Saracen Culture inadequate—Roman Culture, the Extent of its Survival—Roman Schools—Classical Literature—Inadequacy for the Crisis of these Survivals—The New Civilization not the Effect of Survivals—Illustration and Proof from Gregory the Great—The New Nations and the Church—The Soil of the New Civilization—Nominal Conversions—Their Value—Testimony of Sir J. Stephen, of Ritter—Effect on the Growth of Papal Supremacy.

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§ IV. Examination of the Social Work of the Church in Detail—Greater Value of Human Life—Deduction for the Penal Code—The Inquisition—The Abolition of Slavery—The Redemption of Captives—The Church and Poverty—Breaking down Class Distinctions—St. Louis and Brother Giles—The Modern Fear of Poverty —The Doctrine of Works and its Effect on Charity—The Church and War—The Increase of Fanaticism—Diminution of Atrocity—The Ideal of Chivalry—The Status of Woman—The Ideal of Virginity —Place of Women in the Middle Ages—Illustrations—The Church and the Growth of Liberty—The Difference in this matter between the Early and Later Middle Ages—Aquinas and Marsiglio—The Rise of Democracy—The Social Guilds—Their Work and Extent—The Great Pillage—Practical Christian Socialism.

§ V. In Social Evolution Factors now harmful have played their Part—Illustration from the Papacy—From the Penitential System—Its Origin and Evils—Disciplinary Powers—The Conception of Solidarity in the Doctrine of Merit.

§ VI. The Work of Monasticism—Monasticism and the Papacy—The Origin of Monasticism—The Debt of Civilization—New Dignity of Toil —The Value of Obedience—Monasticism and the Layman—The Deductions that must be Made.

§ VII. The Reform Movements of the Later Middle Ages—Their Classification—The new Spirit of Nationalism—Evangelical Poverty—The Union of Democracy and Reform—Arnold of Brescia—The Peasants' Revolt—Wyclif's Doctrine of Dominion—His Sympathy with the Poor—His Kinship with St. Francis—His Appreciation of the Real Humanity of Jesus—The Emphasis of Humanity among the Lollards.

VII

The Influence of the Christian Church on the Social and Ethical Development of the Middle Ages

With the fall of the Roman Empire in its western section we enter upon a new chapter in the history of humanity. The former things had for ever passed away; but it was rather the coming of a new hell than a new earth or a new heaven that seemed, at first, to be the result. In reality it was necessary to remove the things that were shaken, even though the removal should be by consuming fires, that there might be laid the abiding foundations of the City of God.

The student would do well to obtain some idea of the task which awaited the Church in the centuries between the sack of Rome and the conclusion of the wanderings of the nations. He should turn to the map of the empire and realize its meaning; the majesty of its unity, the diversity of nations and tongues which had lost their differences in the prouder consciousness of a common citizenship, the reality of

the law and order which bound the ends of the earth to one common centre, the extent and depth of its civilization, the wide diffusion of the arts, culture, and science of the old world. The darker sides of the picture he would do well, for the moment, to neglect; the religious rottenness, the financial ruin, the limited few for whom the culture and civilization existed, the vast hordes of slaves, the social and political cancers which had eaten out the heart of the empire. These things should be abstracted; the majesty of Rome and her civilization is so incontestably great that a world in which that force was lost, or apparently lost, seemed to Christian prophet and heathen thinker alike a ruined world. From his realization of the greatness of the empire, and the debt under which she had laid humanity, let the reader now turn to the results of the wanderings of the nations. In place of the old unity of speech, religion, law, and civilization, we find a babel of languages, a chaos of conflicting barbarisms; anarchy written large on all life, and darkness covering the face of the deep.

A brief survey of the extent of the ruin may not be out of place. The invasion of Greece by the West Goths under Alaric (396) began the series of movements which resulted in the breaking up of the Western Empire into barbarian kingdoms. Driven from their original home round the Aral, by the presence of the Huns, the West Goths swept through Thrace, Greece, and Illyricum and under Alaric captured Rome itself (408). The death of Alaric at Cosenza terminated for a while their onward march; but this deadly blow at the heart of the empire had already been accompanied by the loss of outlying provinces. In 407 the Romans retired from Britain; fifty years

later such civilization as they had established was swept away before the inroads of Saxons, Angles and Jutes. In 409 a mixed band of Vandals, Suevians and Alans—the last a race, probably, of non-Aryan origin—crossed the Rhine, ravaged Gaul, and occupied Spain, though many of the towns still remained in Roman hands. In 413 the West Goths, retiring from Italy, advanced to the Pyrenees, and established in North-East Spain a kingdom with Barcelona as the capital, in Southern Gaul a second kingdom round Toulouse. From these centres they slowly extended their dominion over almost the whole of the peninsula. In consequence of their pressure, the Vandals in 429 abandoned Spain and invaded Africa. Under the leadership of Gaiseric their conquest was rapid; the loss of Carthage in 439 marked the beginning of the end of Roman dominion. Thirty years later Sardinia, Corsica and the Balearic Islands surrendered to their fleets.

Northern Gaul had already fallen before the Salian Franks. This German tribe from the regions between the Scheldt and Rhine throughout the fifth century slowly consolidated their conquests, until in 507 Chlodovech (Clovis) drove back the West Goths beyond the Garonne. Meanwhile in South-East Gaul the Burgundians established themselves in Savoy (439); while in Italy Theodoric founded an Ostrogothic kingdom which stretched from Pannonia (Hungary) to Sicily (489–493).

Even more dreaded than Vandals, Ostrogoths, or Franks were the Huns, Asiatic nomads akin to the Turks, who in the fifth century established under Attila an empire which reached from the Volga to the Rhine, from the Danube to the Baltic. Their defeat at Mery-sur-Seine in 451 alone saved Gaul

from their devastations; while their invasion of Italy in 452 and their sack of the great city of Aquileia are said to have led to the foundation of Venice by Christian fugitives.

In the sixth century, a temporary revival of the empire under Justinian († 576) led to the disappearance of the kingdoms of the Vandals and Ostrogoths; but other races were ready to take their place. In 565 the Lombards descended into Italy from Pannonia, and within four years won for themselves the country which they still possess.

Meanwhile in the East Slavonic tribes, Chrobats, Serbs, Sorbs and others were slowly occupying what once had been imperial soil, bringing with them political problems, the end of which is not yet; while in Northern Europe, Slovenes, Wends, and Czechs were establishing themselves in their permanent homes, attempting to hem in Teutonic expansion on the East.

As if the medley of races were not sufficient, we find in the seventh century the Turanians swarming over parts of Europe. In 679 the Bulgarians crossed the Danube and occupied their present kingdom. Another oriental tribe, the Ugrian Magyars, a race very different in origin from the Huns, were for many years the terror of Europe. But in 955, after their great defeat by Otto the Great, they settled down in Pannonia, a district afterwards known, by a mistake in identification, as Ungaria or Hungary.

A blow to the Church, even more serious, was to come from the East. When Gregory the Great died (604), Muhammad had not yet begun to believe in his own mission. Before the century was completed, Syria, North Africa, Egypt, the most fertile districts of Spain—Leon alone was saved for the Cross—had

exchanged their Christianity for the creed of their Muslim masters. The great victory of Charles Martel at Tours (732) alone saved France from the same fate. At one time (849) it seemed as if Rome herself would become a Muhammadan city; the coasts and islands of Italy had already fallen before the Saracen fleets.

The West had scarcely begun to recover from its struggle with the Caliphate when the thirst for plunder woke again in North and East. Swarms of Wikings, secure in their command of the sea, descended on every coast, swept up the rivers to burn the inland towns, and destroyed with indifferent ferocity church, castle, and village. "Deliver us, O Lord," ran the litany of the times, "from the frenzy of the Northmen." Heathenism hurled itself in a last desperate rally on the Christian world. Thor and Woden and misshapen Asiatic monsters struggled to overthrow the Cross.

When in 482 the terrible Attila, after his defeat by the Visigoths at the battle of the Catelaunian fields (Chalons), flung himself on Italy, the Romans, in their despair, sent the foremost of their citizens to implore the Hun to make peace and withdraw. With their senators they associated the venerable Leo, their bishop. The mission was successful; Attila and his Mongolian hordes retired to Pannonia. Later legends have claimed all the credit of this deliverance for the Bishop of Rome. Leo is represented, for instance, in the paintings of Raffaele as standing with the great figures of St. Peter and St. Paul at his back, menacing with drawn sword and unutterable woes the trembling Hun. Which things are an allegory. In Leo, for whose person Attila probably felt no more reverence than for that of his fellows in the deputa-

tion, we salute the representative of the force which alone could subdue the barbarian. For we may boldly claim that the Church saved civilization ; but for her missions and her influence this would have perished.

II

The story of Christian aggression forms no part of our purpose. The great missions of the early Middle Ages will ever remain one of the proudest records of the Church. The heroes of the Cross, with their lives in their hands, succeeded in recovering for their Master the lost provinces of His kingdom. From the Steppes of Russia to the shores of the Atlantic, the barbarians, nominally at least, before the end of the eleventh century accepted the authority and submitted to the discipline of the Church. The savage Wends between the Elbe and Oder were almost the last to forsake their idols ; not until 1333 did Albert the Bear of Brandenburg beat down into a reluctant Christianity the dwellers round the modern Berlin. But passing by the records of victory, we must confine ourselves to the question : what was the effect upon civilization of this aggression of the Church ?

We have claimed that civilization was saved by the Church ; at the same time it was transformed. As is usual in all great movements, the movement itself was almost unconscious of what it effected. The Church was not thinking of civilization—for civilization in some of its aspects the mediæval Church had a profound contempt—she was thinking of herself, or rather of her Master. The great missionary

enterprises inaugurated in the seventh century by Pope Gregory the Great were only just in time. On every side the dominion of the Church was threatened, her borders straitened. Only by persistent aggression could Christianity be saved, more especially when we remember that the Cross was destined shortly to lose the Greek Empire in Europe and Asia Minor to the Othman Turks.

The changes produced by the inrush of the barbarians were more than territorial. They swept away not only Roman rule, but Roman civilization; this last, in some lands, partially only, in others, for instance England, absolutely and for ever. Roman law gave place to the customs of the tribes; Roman schools survived only in a few sheltered towns; classic culture became lost for centuries; above all the "Pax Romana," the greatest gift which Rome conferred on humanity, was exchanged for the confused struggle of tribe with tribe. Life everywhere, in all its forms, whether social or political, tended to slip back into barbarism. But for the Church the ruin would have been complete.

For, save in the Church, where else shall we find, in the general welter of the times, a force sufficient to save civilization? Shall we turn to the new nations —Franks, Huns, Northmen and the like? Or, since this is unthinkable, shall we fall back upon the culture introduced into Europe by the Arabs; the arts and sciences which we owe to their inspiration? But unless we misread the whole history of the West, Eastern culture must always have formed an alien element, the mark, at best, of Saracen conquerors. Its philosophy, potent though it became as an heretical force in the schools of Toledo and Paris, was too essentially Eastern in its Pantheism to influence the West.

As one of the elements absorbed by the awakening intelligence of Europe, Saracen culture had its value; as a foundation for Western civilization and moral life it was impossible. Nor shall we rest on firmer ground if we seek for our sources of civilization in the survival of the old Greek and Roman culture.

The extent of the survival of the Roman culture —for our present purpose Greek letters may be neglected—has often, it is true, been underestimated. In the darkest days of barbarian triumph there were still here and there, in Italy at least, Roman Schools, and the traditions of Roman culture and law. These, like Roman roads, Roman aqueducts and bridges, were built too solidly to be easily swept away. But though surviving, their effect upon the life of the surrounding barbarians was but slight. We may take, for instance, Roman Law, the codification of which was the great legacy of the later Empire. The key to the existence of Lombard cities and Lombard schools lies in the continued recognition through the darkest ages of the old Roman system of jurisprudence. But the effect of Roman Law upon the barbarians was almost nil until they had been Christianized. Only when the age of iron gave place to the first rude attempts at order could Roman Law re-assert herself. Then indeed her influence was tremendous, both upon the common law of the new nations, and especially upon the Canon Law of the Church. This last, in fact, was moulded upon the Roman model. But this influence, we maintain, was secondary, not causal, the result of a suitable environment prepared by the Church. Without the civilization fostered by the Church the nations would never have turned from their rude codes to the more scientific jurisprudence of Justinian. For the question of the influence of

Roman Law resolves itself into the struggle between the surviving Romanized and Christianized civic communities and the surrounding barbarian and heathen populations with their own codes. But for Christianity the struggle would have been unto death; it was really the Christianity of the towns that won over the country pagans.

In estimating the effect of Roman Law upon civilization we must not forget that its influence was not without its drawbacks. If we compare the legal story of England and Germany we see the greater benefit that might have accrued from the growth of a native system of law, Teutonic in origin, moulded under Christian influences, than from the institution of a jurisprudence that in some aspects at least was essentially alien. Many of the worst features of law, in Germany especially, are the result of this old wine in new bottles.

This reasoning is still more correct when applied to Roman schools, and all the culture that Roman schools might be supposed to have fostered. That here and there the traditions of the old schools lingered on, perhaps even the actual schools themselves, need not be disputed. But the influence of this old culture as a civilizing element was almost nothing, until the Church had done the spade-work which alone made it fruitful. The new schools of Europe, from Charles the Great and Alcuin to Abailard, were, with few exceptions, strictly Christian schools; if not the work of missionaries, at any rate the result of the labours of great Christian teachers. From the sixth to the twelfth centuries the great educational centres were almost invariably monasteries; they alone kept burning a dim but living light. In the twelfth century no doubt we see a change. Education passed away

from the monastery to the cathedral school; this last, in turn, gave place to the grammar school and the university. We may call this great twelfth century movement—the leading figure of which was Abailard—"the protest of the secular spirit"; but, if so, we must be careful to define our terms. The opposition of "secular" is to the "regular" or monastic, not to the Church, much less to Christianity—this last an idea almost inconceivable to the mediæval mind. But whether by "secular" or "regular", the mediæval education of Europe, such as it was, owed all to the protecting care of the Church—Italy alone possibly excepted—until the rise of the Universities, and the first dawn of the Renaissance.

But if the great civilizing forces of the Middle Ages cannot be found in either Roman Law or Roman Schools, much less shall we find them in the survival of that Roman and Greek culture which formed so great a factor in the Renaissance. As a matter of fact, during the Middle Ages Latin literature was almost unknown. Virgil survived; but chiefly as the memory of a mighty wizard. The gold of past culture had sunk; for the most part it was only the light and worthless rubbish that had floated down the stream of time, saved for us by Boethius, Cassiodorus, Martianus Capella and other compilers. So little was the old culture a factor in the new civilization that it might be maintained, with a fair show of justice, that the Church sinned against civilization by the contempt she poured upon this culture, and the trivial place in life to which through her influence culture was condemned during mediæval times, with the single exception, from the twelfth century onwards, of the logic of Aristotle—the "new logic" as it was called—and Plato's doctrine of ideas. The rise of

the Western Church was no doubt accompanied by a steady decline in the study of classical letters; Greek became an unknown language; the grammarian was expelled by the schoolman; in some quarters learning was looked upon as a hindrance to the Gospel. The reproduction of material became, in time, all that was asked of scholars. But the more we emphasize this result, the more potent the argument that the new civilization was not the effect of the survival of Greek or Roman culture. No better illustration of this can be found than the fact that the hostility of the Church to pagan culture finds its most famous expression in one to whom civilization will ever owe an incalculable debt.[1]

The hostility to classic culture of Gregory the Great and other early mediæval ecclesiastics should not be misinterpreted. "It was to a great extent merely the reflection within the sphere of Theology of the political and social conditions of the times."[2] In reality it was only among Churchmen that an educational ideal was maintained at all. We cannot therefore subscribe to the opinion of some writers of repute who have contended that the hostility of the Church to secular learning flung back civilization, to some extent even Christianity itself, into a superstition very little superior to paganism. We may own that the age between Charles the Great and Hildebrand was one of almost universal darkness, in which religion, divorced not merely from learning but also from morality, assimilated to herself a variety of pagan

[1] Gregory the Great: *Ep.* ix. 54. "A report has reached us which we cannot explain without a blush that thou expoundest grammar to certain friends," etc.

[2] Rashdall, *Universities in the Middle Ages*, i. 26.

and materialistic elements. But this divorce, with all its disastrous consequences to civilization, was due to the hopeless welter of the age rather than to the spirit of the Church. We have proof of this last in the fact that every mediæval revival of religious life, for instance the great reform of the eleventh century, the moving spirit of which was Hildebrand, led at once to a new interest in letters, in art, and in all the higher things of life. Even the religious movements which at first sight seem antagonistic to civilization, for instance monasticism, will be found, upon examination, to furnish their contribution.

We have claimed that the idea of finding the great new civilizing factor in the life of the barbarian nations is unthinkable. The statement needs a certain qualification. In the successive swarms of barbarians the keenest eye can detect little but savagery, mitigated by frankness and bravery, and by a certain absence of the corruptions of the dying Roman world. Nevertheless the new nations formed a fine soil for the growth of a new culture; but the new culture was in every case planted there by the Church, in no case the product of internal latent powers. We may take as an illustration the case of the Northmen of Normandy. At the commencement of the tenth century they were still the terror and scourge of Christendom. Their drinking cups were oftentimes human skulls; their amusement to throw children into the air and catch them on the points of their spears. By the end of the century the Norman pirates had forgotten their native land, its language and rough customs, and abandoned the worship of Woden for that of "the white Christ." The result was marvellous, both in the facts themselves and in the rapidity of their

accomplishment. The new faith chastened and transformed into the beginnings of a new poetry the wild fancy which had thought of the thunder as the hammer of Thor, and heard in the wind the war-cry of Woden. Hence it is in Normandy that we first see the breaking of light in the dark ages. There the new and nobler spirit became a national enthusiasm. Monasteries arose in every glade, while the schools of Bec and Avranches might well be called, for awhile, the universities of the West. Thus the energy of the Wiking pirates, at the call of the Church, aroused Europe from its night of sleep, and gave a new dawn to civilization. But the force that made for civilization was the transforming touch of the Church.

Before we pass away from the conversion of the nations it may be well to meet an objection. These wholesale conversions, it may be urged, were but nominal and external. Christianity gave to barbarism hardly more than its superstition, turning its cruelty into the new channels of hatred for unbelievers and heretics. It scarcely cleansed the outside of the cup and platter; within it was as of old full of extortion and excess. All this is true and more. Nevertheless it is one of those half truths which are more false than any lie. "Where is that country and what is that time in which Christianity has been more than this amongst the great multitude of those who have called and professed themselves Christians? The travellers in the narrow way who are guided by her vital spirit have ever been the "chosen few." The travellers along the broad way, wearing her exterior and visible badges, have ever been the "many called." And yet he who should induce any heathen people to adopt the mere ceremonial of the Church, to cele-

brate her ritual, and to recognize, though but in words, the authority of her Divine Head, would confer on them a blessing exceeding all which mere human philanthropy has ever accomplished or designed. For such is the vivifying influence of the spirit of the Gospel that it can never be long otherwise than prolific of the highest temporal benefits to all, and of the highest spiritual blessing to some in every land which acknowledges it as a rule of life, and receives it as a system of worship." [1]

To the same effect also is the verdict of another thinker. "Christianity," says Ritter, in his *History of Christian Philosophy*, "offered itself and was accepted by the German tribes as a law and as a discipline, as an ineffable incomprehensible mystery. Its fruits were righteousness and works and belief in the dead word. But in a barbarous people this is an immense advance, an inestimable benefit. Ritual observance is a taming, humiliating process; it is submission to law; it is the acknowledgment of spiritual inferiority; it implies self-subjection, self-conquest, self-sacrifice. It is not religion in its highest sense, but it is a preparation for it."

One result of this nominal and rudimentary conversion must not be overlooked. Its very superficiality rendered easy the supremacy of Rome. Superstition is ever the characteristic of the heathen; conversion and civilization but slowly destroy its hold. Upon its follies and terrors, as well as upon reverence and awe, Rome securely founded her vast system of privilege and pretension. Moreover, if the Church influenced the barbarian, the barbarian was not without his reaction on the Church. We see this in the

[1] Sir J. Stephen, *Collected Essays*, p. 130.

growth in the Church of materialized superstitions.[1] If these to the modern mind seem oftentimes to differ but slightly from the grossest idolatries we must remember, as some excuse, the wilder practices from which the heathen were weaned. The history of Latin Christianity is the demonstration that childishness, as well as wisdom, is oftentimes justified by her children. The whole policy of Rome, in its dealings with the heathen, will be found in the letter of Gregory the Great to Mellitus: "It is evidently impossible, in the case of hard hearts, to cut off everything at once. A man who is endeavouring to scale a summit rises by steps, not by bounds."[2] Rome grew because she was in creed, organization and ritual perfectly adapted, as a biologist would phrase it, to an imperfect environment. She ruled the age becaused she represented in herself its weakness as well as its strength. Unlike the early Church she took refuge in a policy of syncretism[3].

III

We should do well to inquire what it was in the life of the mediæval Church that especially made for civilization in its relations with the rough material left by the barbarian conquests. One word of caution

[1] See Dict. Christian Antiq., ii. 1542.

[2] The whole letter should be read. See Bede *H. E.* i. xxx. With this should be compared Gregory's letter to Augustine, ib. i. xxvii. (undoubtedly genuine), and the letter of Boniface in Haddan and Stubbs' *Councils*, iii. 304–6.

[3] On the refusal of the Church in the first three centuries to adopt a policy of syncretism see my *Persecution in the Early Church*, pp. 86, 351.

is advisable at the outset. In our discussion we shall deal with the matter in an abstract fashion, examining the great forces and processes of society much as the anatomist examines an organism or bodily framework. From such examination much may be learned. But after all more important far than organic framework is the life of which this frame is but the outer covering or shell. And it was neither the beauty of its sacred writings, the strength of its organizations, nor the fascination of its religious services, but the life of Christ manifesting itself abundantly in the mediæval Church—poor, incomplete, inconsistent, as may at times have been its expression—that saved the world from the deluge, and in place of barbarism restored civilization.

The student would do well to note that the Christianity which civilized has always been Catholic. Many of the barbarians were converted at a time when they were in contact with Arians, and Arians, in consequence, they became. But Arianism, however vigorous it might appear for the moment, has always proved in the long run to be effete and unfruitful. The peoples which adopted it have either died out, for instance the Vandals, or have repented and received the Catholic faith, as the Visigoths. But in all ages the Christianity which has remained loyal to Christ and His claims has wielded an influence the extent and duration of which cannot be explained by logic, and which forms in itself no small part of the argument for the truth of the Catholic faith.

Moreover, in spite of all shortcomings, there has never been a time when the Church has forgotten its divine mission as the representative of Him Who came not to be ministered unto but to minister. Even in the dreariest days God has not left Himself

without His witnesses, men and women not a few, whose lives, made radiant by the Cross, have filled with light the darkest places. In every age, even in those in which the life of the Church has seemed at its lowest, the greatest force that has made for civilization and uplifting has been the continued vitality of the great principles of the Gospel; its abounding altruism; the value given to the poorest and meanest as the brother for whom Christ died; the stress laid upon sin as the blot on human life, the hindrance to further progress, the cause of inevitable retribution; the revolution effected by the teaching of a future life, the bringing in of a new world to redress the balance of the old, with its doctrine of judgement and consequent rewards and punishments.

Nor must we overlook in our enumeration of the factors in Christianity that have made for the regeneration of mankind its optimism. The crude doctrine of total depravity enunciated by St. Augustine has never succeeded in banishing, in practice, the belief of the Church that the latent powers which make for righteousness exceed those which are evil, that even in the far country man is near the kingdom of God, and that human nature, on the whole, is on the side of the angels. With these necessary cautions we are now in a position to approach the somewhat abstract question; what was it in the mediæval Church that especially fitted it to be the formative factor in mediæval civilization?

Before an answer can be given we need to ask the further question: what were the essential features of the barbarians the taming of whom fell to the lot of the Church. By an answer we do not intend a catalogue of vices—cruelty, lust, bloodshed, and the like—these, it might fairly be contended, were as

marked characteristics of the Romans whom they had conquered as of the barbarian victors. We would look deeper ; can we find in barbarism a general formula of which its various aspects are in the main the expression ? Can we find a similar general formula in the life of the mediæval Church ? We think we can.

The great central principle of barbarism, as we see it at work in the Western world on the break up of the empire, is its essential individualism. The limit of outlook is the local tribe ; neighbour and enemy are almost interchangeable terms. The one bond of solidarity is the great chief, and the usages and customs that centuries of superstition had turned into bonds more unbreakable than steel. The state as state—a collective fact, not the mere expression of loyalty to the individual chief—is unknown ; and in consequence all political matters are in constant flux. As in the lower organisms, kingdoms divide and sub-divide, or reunite their fragments, with amazing facility. Generalizations are often dangerous, but we shall not err widely in summing up the inner spirit of European barbarism as unregulated individualism.

One illustration of this position must suffice. The Wiking, sailing from his Northern home, thinks nothing of the spread of his empire, casts few looks behind, is bound by no links of loyalty. He sails hither and thither, indifferent to all save the impulses of the moment. If he settles, it is not as a colonist pushing forward the frontiers of his native state. Whether Varangian in Russia, or Norman in France and Sicily, he forgets the old and founds round himself a new kingdom. The very intensity of his individualism, unfettered by national outlook or lasting tradition,

enables him rapidly to adapt the new state, whether in Russia, France, or Sicily, to the special environment. Even language, the one feature, besides his religion, which links him on to his former associates, is to him so essentially an individual matter, that he is willing to cast it aside for the tongue of the people he has conquered, as he had already cast aside his religion. The Frank in Gaul, Norman in France, Varangian in Russia, Lombard in Italy, are but a few of the illustrations of this principle that we could furnish.

Nor was it only among the barbarians that we find the action of particularist tendencies. We see the same fatal process at work in the Carolingian Empire. The kingdom the unity of which has been painfully accomplished by the labours of some hero, ever tends to fall back into an aggregation of counties loosely bound together by shadowy ties, which are yet too weak to prevent the constant internecine strife. The period of the heptarchy was not peculiar to England; what was peculiar was the speedy deliverance of our country from the centrifugal forces which on the Continent wrecked all attempts at political unity. The student of to-day is apt to be misled by such modern facts as France, Italy and Germany into forgetting that in the Middle Ages the Continent was split up into an indescribable number of semi-independent duchies, counties, bishoprics, and the like. But for the unity given by the Church the forces of disintegration might have become supreme.

In contrast to this unregulated individualism of the barbarian, we find in the mediæval economy the working out of the great principle of solidarity. The effort of human society in the Middle Ages is to fit itself in with great institutions, or rather with the

governing ideas of such institutions. The one means that is held out to men as the key to accomplishment is the sinking of the individual in some form of corporate life. Instead of the struggle of clan with clan we find the great dominant conception of a world-empire and a world-Church. Of these two the second is the more important ; the unity of all in one Catholic Church lies at the root of the notion of one Holy Roman Empire.

The absorption of the individual into a corporation, primarily spiritual but with a secondary outlook upon the political, is thus the key to mediæval life and thought. The religious life of the individual was but in a slight sense a matter of his own experience. From first to last in the spiritual world he is conditioned and determined by his corporate environment ; his baptism into the corporation, his participation in its sacraments, his relation to a priestly caste, and the like. Just as in the secular mediæval state the life of the individual was conditioned by his guild, rank, or city in a way and to a degree of which we have to-day illustrations only in the dreams of Socialists, so, even more strictly, in the spiritual life. In fact, it was the training in the consciousness of solidarity, given from cradle to grave by the Church, that alone made possible the emphasis placed upon corporate life in the civil estate.

We are at length in a position to answer our question : What was the great force in the Catholic Church that made for civilization, leaving aside for the moment its definite spiritual activities? We find it in this consciousness of solidarity. But in reality this principle is none other than the translation into new and more spiritual terms of the root principles of the old Roman Empire into whose dominion the Church

had stepped, whose genius of administration she had inherited, whose work she was destined to carry on to still higher issues. This it was, enforced by all the sanctions and fears of another world, that subdued the individualism of the barbarian, with its vagaries and divisions, and forced him slowly to adapt himself to the needs, limitations and service of society ; that gave him a wider outlook than the clan and its struggles; that made him conscious both of what he owed to posterity, and of his indebtedness to the past.

Furthermore in this emphasis of solidarity we see the force which prepared the new races to receive the inheritance of law and order which had come down to them from Rome. The Church by its great essential ideas made ready the soil, dug about the roots, rendered possible in different ways the renewed vitality of the withered but undying principles of Roman and Hellenic civilization. The secret of civilization is growth combined with continuity ; progress is never the result of cataclysm. The Church not only supplied the element of continuity with older cultures, but, from its very nature, the possibilities of and stimulus to development and growth.

The student should not forget that the emphasis laid by the Church upon solidarity was not material only ; it demanded from all the apperception of certain ideas. The gross materialism of much of the corporate life of the mediæval Church cannot be denied ; but even the most superstitious devotee could not fail to be conscious at sundry times and in divers ways of the existence of a great spiritual society the bounds of which, both past and future, were in the infinite distances. By many differing ways (superstitious or otherwise need not now detain us), he was ever forced to realize that his salvation depended

completely upon his union with a Church visible and invisible, upon forces spiritual, far-reaching, infinite, that transcended the little circle of his immediate sensations. Whatever the superstition, or ignorance of the Middle Ages—and we are not careful to minimize these matters—underlying all we may find the presence of potent ideas that drove men to look before and after. But it is precisely the absence of such ideas that constitutes barbarism, with its concentration upon the needs of the moment; it is the presence above all else of such ideas that makes for civilization.

This consciousness of solidarity, characteristic of the mediæval Church, was of immense social significance; it took the disintegrated units of life and society that survived the barbarian invasions and built them up into a new order, drawing strength even from the prevalent decay. By its more spiritual conceptions, above all by the homage which in the worship of Christ it ever paid to renunciation, the Church slowly broke up the military ideas of feudalism, and for brute force and passion substituted law and order. Its doctrine of the unity of the human race, both in Adam and in Christ, was destined to prove fatal to all slavery. Even the mediæval doctrine of sin, by its essentially social rather than individualistic outlook, became, as we shall see later, a powerful instrument in the suppression of barbarian tempers and customs.

One objection to this generalization is so obvious that it needs to be met. We have emphasized the solidarity of the Catholic Church as the root idea—neglecting for the moment the spiritual forces—which gave her power to tame the individualism of the barbarian. But historians have pointed out that the Reformation was the protest of the individual

against an organization which gave the individual as such little or no place. How then, it may be asked, can the Reformation be looked upon as a factor in advancing civilization, when it appears to be a set-back to ideas from which humanity had been emancipated by the mediæval Church ?

The answer is plain. The individualism of the Reformation was not the individualism of the barbarian ; it was an individualism of thought, not of action. Unregulated individualism in action, whether in the fifth-century Vandal or the twentieth-century manufacturer, leads to anarchy ; individualism in thought, however ill regulated, makes for liberty, and, in the long run, for righteousness. Individualism may rightly be claimed to be the highest and rarest product of human development, but such individualism does not come first in the order of time, except in so far as we may dimly discern its roots in the anarchic selfishness of the barbarian. In the historical order solidarity comes first, alone making possible the civilization in which this higher individualism—genius, personal magnetism, leadership, lofty thought, the artist's touch, the poet's vision—call it what we will—shall have its truest chance.

Moreover, the protest of individualism was not the only feature of the Reformation. Side by side with it we see the revolt of nationalism, the determination of the Western nations to work out their own life on their own lines. But nationalism and individualism necessarily contain contradictory elements. In the play of these two principles—the greater opportunity of the individual as such, the expression of solidarity in nationalism rather than in the unity of creed, ritual and organization—united only in their protest against the common tyranny of Rome, we see

the cause and trace the varying phases of the Reformation. But the consideration of this matter belongs elsewhere.

IV

From this somewhat abstract generalization we shall do well to pass on to details. In any survey of the civilizing factors of the mediæval Church we may claim the value assigned to human life as the result of the doctrines of the sanctity of each immortal soul; the mitigation of the horrors of war; the impulse given to the manumission of slaves. The mediæval Church provided the one power that could successfully oppose the reign of force, that could uphold and maintain a certain discipline over the passions of the greatest. To the Church also we owe the formation of a loftier ideal of womanhood, the beginnings of education, the rise of art, the noblest achievements of architecture. In the coming of the friars, to a lesser extent also in the earlier monastic movement, we note the most successful effort ever made towards constructive socialism. Many of these matters are so self-evident, so acknowledged by all, that they need not detain us; some have been dealt with already in a previous section, in so far as we see them at work in the early Church in its relation to the Roman Empire.

The emphasis of the greater value of human life is observed in the formation of a strong public opinion against the common sins of the empire, abortion and infanticide; and in the growth during the Middle Ages of foundling hospitals. That this last movement became in time a source of danger to chastity must not blind us to its value at its first origin in

teaching charity and humanity. Nor should we overlook, as another instance of the great law of compensation that runs through all history, that the compassion of the Church for infants was largely the result of its extreme doctrine of Baptism. The hell which, according to common belief, awaited the unbaptized, led the Church to insist on the saving of life. But from the serfdom or slavery into which the children thus saved were too often sold the mediæval Church only slowly effected deliverance.

From the credit due to the Church on this matter of the greater value attached to life, the crown of which was the abolition of the gladiatorial shows, one deduction must be made. The Church in the Middle Ages did nothing to mitigate the barbarity of the penal code. This is the more remarkable when we remember that the early Church excluded its members from holding office in the State, because their duties could not be carried out "without chaining and torturing." [1] Unfortunately the persecuting zeal of the intolerant led not only to the abandonment of this early spirit, but in the later Middle Ages to a decided retrogression. In 1252 Innocent IV made torture legal for the hunting of heretics, and forced its use on the secular courts. Not the least of the many crimes of the mediæval Inquisition was the way in which she thus poisoned the administration of justice and the methods of evidence. To this sin she added the studied hypocrisy with which, on handing over the "relaxed" to secular judgment, she solemnly admonished the authorities that the punishment to be enforced "should not imperil life or limb, or cause effusion of blood."

As regards slavery the progress made in the Middle Ages was somewhat slow. We must remember that

[1] See my *Persecution in the Early Church*, p. 179.

the Church did not at first recognize the greatness of St. Paul's *Epistle to Philemon*, that no slave question existed in the early Church, and that the legitimacy of slavery was generally acknowledged in theory. But in practice, the doctrine of the value of "the brother for whom Christ died" slowly triumphed. The freedom of serf or slave in testamentary bequest was inculcated as the most acceptable gift that could be made "for the benefit of the soul." By the end of the fourteenth century slavery in Europe of Christian people was almost unknown. Serfdom lingered long, and its abolition was hindered by the great number of serfs attached to the estates of the Church. Many of these no doubt were originally free peasants who had bartered their liberty for the greater security and protection which the spiritual overlord could afford. Like many other movements commendable in their origin this, in time, became a disaster both for civilization and the Church. The serfs of the Church were among the last to secure their liberty. But in its practical working mediæval serfdom was not quite so evil as it seems to us to-day. We may well doubt whether the landless peasantry of modern England, though nominally free, is in reality much better off than the mediæval villain whose land was secured to him by custom.

Closely connected with the abolition of slavery was the constant effort of the Church, throughout the Middle Ages, to redeem Christian captives from their servitude. This movement had been begun in the days of persecution ; one of the objects of the monthly collection allowed by Roman Law in the churches was the redemption of brethren banished to the mines of Sardinia. With the barbarian invasions such a fund became still more necessary ; and the leaders

of the Church, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, Cæsarius, Eligius and others distinguished themselves by their efforts in this matter. Cæsarius of Arles († 542) was not the only bishop of his times who, to purchase back the captives of his flock, sold the gold and silver vessels and ornaments of his church. When money failed Eligius of Noyon (*b.* 588) in his constant work of manumission, he sold even his clothing. The Muslim conquests and the terror of the Algerine pirates, led the Middle Ages to found societies specially devoted to this object, the chief of which was the Trinitarians or Maturines. But in all such movements the Church took the foremost part ; to the mediæval mind a philanthropy not ecclesiastical in origin and control was almost inconceivable.

With the abolition of slavery there came into greater prominence the evil of poverty. From the first the Church sought to meet this by constant charity. Collections for the poor always formed part of the Eucharistic services, and at an early date charity was elevated into one of the leading graces and merits of life. The effects of this zeal for the poor made themselves manifest in the closing days of the Empire ; they were even more apparent in the Middle Ages. We see, perhaps, the highest expression of this spirit in the great revival ushered in by St. Francis of Assisi. No religious life seemed then to be complete which did not devote itself to the care of the outcast or leper, or give of its substance to the relief of the sick and the aged. All over Europe the rude barbarity of the times was counteracted by a deep stream of pity which founded hospitals, lazar-houses, and almshouses in almost every city and village. Nor were the claims of the poor in the matter of education forgotten. The Franciscan revival

ushered in the golden age of our universities; for a few years Oxford and Paris were accessible to the poorest. The greater part of the endowments for the mitigation of poverty and suffering were unfortunately swept away at the Reformation, or handed over to individual ownership. This unparalleled pillage of the common wealth by the greed of unprincipled exploiters of the Reformation forms a great stain upon a movement that in other respects ministered to the social well-being.

One effect of the mediæval habit of charity was to break down the barriers which separated the classes. Of Aletta, the noble mother of St. Bernard, we are told that "she was accustomed to go personally from house to house, searching out the poor and weak . . . preparing food for them, ministering to the sick, cleansing their cups and vessels with her own hands, and performing for them the humblest offices usually discharged by servants." Such records might be multiplied indefinitely; they witness to a kindliness of sympathy between rich and poor that did much to counteract the evils of feudalism, and to redress economic inequalities.

The call to fraternity, as we have seen, reached its climax in the coming of the friars. In France the number of leper hospitals rapidly sprang from a few to over two thousand. But by nothing is the success of St. Francis' attempt to bring the classes together more clearly brought out than in the famous tale of the *Little Flower*.

How St. Louis, King of France, went in person in the guise of a pilgrim to Perugia for to visit the holy Brother Giles. . . . So the porter went to Brother Giles and told him that at the door was a pilgrim that asked for him. . . . And being inspired of God it was revealed to him that it was the King of France: so straightway with

great fervour he left his cell, and ran to the door, and without further questioning, albeit they ne'er had seen each other before, kneeling down with great devotion they embraced and kissed each other, with such signs of tender love as though for a long time they had been close familiar friends; but for all that they spoke not, the one nor the other, but continued in this embrace in silence.

Let us hear the comment of one of our own prophets. "Of all which story not a word of course is credible by any rational person. Certainly not: the spirit nevertheless which created the story is an entirely indisputable fact in the history of mankind. Whether St. Louis and Brother Giles ever knelt together in Perugia matters not a whit. That a king and a poor monk could be conceived to have thoughts of each other which no words could speak . . . this is what you have to meditate on here." [1]

We must not pass away from this question of the relation of the Church to poverty and suffering without pointing out the great factors in mediæval life which made for charity. The Middle Ages—unlike the twentieth century—was not afraid of poverty; poverty was not the one evil of life which more than any other must be shunned. So far from looking upon poverty as a crime or stigma, the mediæval Church erred rather in the opposite direction in elevating poverty, provided it was voluntary, into the mark of saintliness. Mediæval practice, we must confess, was not always in accord in this matter with mediæval theory; but the Church of the Middle Ages was at any rate true to its Founder in refusing to recognize the ideal of life in the successful millionaire. Its saints and true leaders never forgot the great lesson taught us in the Old Testament that God is always on the side of the poor and suffering, against the rich

[1] Ruskin, *Mornings in Florence*, p. 89.

and strong. Great wealth and great piety were incompatible ideas; renunciation of riches lay at the root of all holiness, and in such renunciation the poor were not forgotten. Again and again we find that the precept of Christ, "Go, sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and come follow Me," is elevated into the universal rule for all who would seek the higher life. In the lives of the saints no text is so fruitful in producing the great crises of the soul, or in leading to emancipation and light. At one time, even, as we shall see later, no small party in the Church—though for the most part classed as hopeless enthusiasts, Fraticelli, Lollards and the like—sought to make absolute poverty the *sine quâ non* of all true spiritual life.[1]

Moreover, in its doctrine of merit by works the Church possessed a potent weapon for reducing charity into more than a pious sentiment. We must own that too often charity was forced into foolish channels, too often, moreover, it sprang from purely selfish motives. Nevertheless instances abound of attempts to win salvation by deeds of love of the highest benefit to wider circles than the clergy. On all hands, in the Middle Ages, we see the rise of institutions of mercy absolutely unknown to the pagan world. Even the mediæval almsgiving, though doubtless indiscriminate and wasteful, oftentimes even productive of the very miseries it was intended to cure, must not be wholly judged by the rules of Political Economy. The cultivation of a habit, if not a sense, of pity, especially in a society otherwise brutal, is worth more than the accumulation of capital.

As regards the effect of the Church upon war our conclusion is not altogether satisfactory. History shows us that in the Middle Ages the Church stirred

[1] See *infra*, p. 325.

up many wars, some of them of especial ferocity. Nothing could be more appalling in its bloodshed and horror than the struggles over Investitures, which began with Hildebrand, and which were not settled until fifty years later, at the Concordat of Worms (1122). More ferocious still were the Crusades, whether by Europe against the Muslims, by Teutonic Knights against the heathen Wends of Prussia, or by catholic orthodoxy against the Albigensian heretics of France. The ideal of peace so characteristic of the early Church, the disinclination to have anything to do with war, or the soldier's calling even in times of peace, which led to many martyrdoms in the days before Constantine,[1] gave place in the Middle Ages to a delight in war, one cause of which was too often a fanatical spirit or ecclesiastical interests. Against this it is but a slight offset that the Church instituted in the tenth century the "Truce of God," at one time of some value in repressing private wars.

But while it is impossible to plead that the Church diminished the number of wars, we may yet contend with justice that the Church secured a real diminution in their atrocity. Throughout the Middle Ages the rights of the enemy over his conquered foe were savage enough at best, nevertheless we see the slow growth of better things. "The evangelical precepts of peace and love," writes Freeman, "did not put an end to war, they did not put an end to aggressive conquests, but they distinctly humanized the way in which war was carried on. From this time forth the never-ending wars with the Welsh ceased to be wars of extermination. The heathen English had been satisfied with nothing short of destruction and expulsion of

[1] See my *Persecution in the Early Church*, 2nd edition, pp. 181–90.

their enemies; the Christian English thought it enough to reduce them to political subjection." [1] We have an illustration of this greater humanity of war in the way in which the Church secured the recognition of a principle, utterly unknown in the Roman world, that Christian prisoners—Muslim and others were regarded as outside the pale of this charity—should not be reduced to slavery.

Moreover the ideal of chivalry, which the Church fostered and consecrated by special rites, contained within itself many softening elements which could not fail to mitigate the effects of war. To give one instance out of many: of Tescelin, the father of St. Bernard, it is related that while "noble in descent and rich in possessions, he was yet a great lover of the poor, with an extraordinary love of justice, so that he was accustomed to wonder that it should seem hard for any to observe justice toward others, especially that they should desert the justice of God by either fear or love of gain. He was the bravest of soldiers, yet shrank from the praises which others sought. He never took up arms except in defence of his own territory, or at the call of his feudal lord." Such men as Tescelin were not so rare as we are accustomed to think. But, as the chronicler adds, this temper was all due to his "magna pietas."

That the Church uplifted the ideal and status of woman cannot well be denied. Whatever else may be said about the mediæval cult of the Virgin this much must be acknowledged, the immense influence it exerted upon the whole conception of womanhood. More than spoken eloquence or dogmatic teaching, the cult of the Virgin, under its different aspects,

[1] *Norman Conquest*, i. 33–4.

more especially as Mater Dolorosa, or as Virgin and Child, taught men the sacredness of the mother, and the majesty of suffering gentleness.

Writers have sometimes urged that the mediæval Church, by its exaggeration of the value of a celibate life, by the reverence it paid to those who abandoned the cares and duties of motherhood and fatherhood for the contemplative life of the cloisters, lowered the ideal of home. There is in this considerable truth. Ultimately, no doubt, as the Reformation felt, the monastery is opposed to the home, and an exaggerated emphasis upon consecrated virginity is inimical to the best interests of the State. Nunneries, two centuries before the Reformation, had outlived their usefulness; a sufficient proof of this may be found in their general neglect and reduced numbers. But in the earlier dark ages the nunnery had a part to play in civilization of the utmost importance. Only in the monastic life was a woman safe from the unbridled lust of the powerful. Into this retreat, guarded by sacrosanct terrors, none dare break. Barbarians who ventured to insult "the brides of God" soon experienced, or thought they experienced, His avenging wrath. Hence the ideal of virginity, though false and exaggerated, was not without value in counteracting the lustful realities of the world around.

The reader should not forget the important place which women often attained in the mediæval Church, and, in consequence, in the mediæval State. Few nobler types of womanhood have ever appeared than Joan of Arc or Catherine of Siena; few prophets to whom more attention was given than Hildegard of Bingen, or Bridget of Sweden. But these characters, so beautiful and rare, were largely dependent on the mediæval environment. An age which could

produce a Joan of Arc or a St. Catherine may be forgiven many exaggerations and sins for their sakes.

The noblest place of woman is in the home, and mediæval home life was oftentimes more beautiful than we are wont to allow. Again and again in the annals of the age we find records of devoted mothers who trained up their children for service in Church and State with an intensity of consecration which influenced their whole subsequent life. Of such were the mother of St. Anselm, and the mother of St. Bernard, and many other illustrious examples in cottage and castle. In the Middle Ages, as in any age, the germ-cell of all that was best in the social system of the times lay in the purity and consecrated zeal of Christian motherhood.

The greatest service rendered by the Church in the later Middle Ages was the assistance given to the sacred cause of civil liberty. In the early Middle Ages the Church threw its mighty influence into the scale of authority, and abandoned the appeal to the masses on the principles of liberty—one great source of its power in the Roman Empire—for reliance upon the rulers of the new nations. To this change, no doubt, the Church was driven through its contact with the barbarians. To restore order where all around was chaos and ruin needed not so much liberty as force, the authority of such men as Charles the Great, or William the Conqueror.

But in the later Middle Ages, when the peril of the new nations had passed away, the Church returned, to some extent, to its former attitude, and became once more the friend of liberty. We may own that the assistance was rather accidental than deliberate; that the ultimate object of the Church was to obtain authority for herself by the subjection of the State.

Nevertheless, but for the Church, the nations of the West would have been ground between the upper and nether millstones, the competing tyrannies of local magnates and absolute monarchs. The influence of the papacy from the days of Hildebrand onwards was always cast against the claim of kings to exercise authority by an indefeasible title. Ecclesiastical lawyers and theologians were firm in their assertion of the divine right of the people to raise up and pull down princes. "A king," said Thomas Aquinas, "who is unfaithful to his duty forfeits his claim to obedience. It is not rebellion to depose him, for he is himself a rebel whom the nation has a right to pull down." But we see how the doctrine, originally formulated by the Church for its own purposes, and with limitations that would have guarded its own interests, could minister in other hands to the growth of liberty, when Thomas Aquinas goes on to add: "But it is better to abridge the king's power that he may be unable to abuse it. For this purpose the whole nation ought to have a share in governing itself. The Constitution ought to combine a limited and elected monarchy with an aristocracy of merit, and such an admixture of democracy as shall admit all claims to office by popular election. No government has a right to levy taxes beyond the limit determined by the people. All political authority is derived from popular suffrage, and all laws must be made by the people or their representatives."

The assertion of the great principles of liberty is even more clearly found in the *Defensor Pacis* (1324) the *magnum opus* of the great mediæval political thinker, Marsiglio of Padua. Than Marsiglio no seer ever had a clearer vision of the new order towards which the world was slowly moving; no prophet ever

glanced deeper into the future. In his principles the modern Constitutional statesman, the modern Protestant finds little to alter ; he has only to develop and fill in the outline. Sovereignty, so Marsiglio held, rests with the people, " from whom, or the majority of them, determining by their choice or will, expressed by speech in the general assembly of citizens, proceeds all right and power." For the purposes of action " the rule of the king is perhaps the more perfect," but the king, as the officer of the people, must be directly elected. Marsiglio will have nothing to do with either divine right or the hereditary principle. Such elected monarch is responsible to the people, whose instrument he is, and by whom he may be deposed if he override the national will. Equally remarkable is Marsiglio's anticipation of certain modern social movements. He would give to the civil power the right of determining the number of men to be employed in every trade or profession.

Now the astonishing thing is that these two quotations are from writers of utterly hostile schools. Thomas Aquinas was, and is still, the chosen advocate of Rome ; Marsiglio sweeps away the pretensions of a sacerdotal order, and would treat the clergy, in all but their strictly spiritual functions, exactly the same as all other members of the civil society. With Marsiglio the State is supreme, or rather, State and Church —this last he defines as the corporation of the faithful—become one. Ecclesiastics, even the pope himself, must be subject to the State's tribunals, their number be limited by its pleasure. To the State also belongs all patronage, which should as a rule be exercised by the free election of the parish itself, with which also should rest the power of dismissal. The ecclesiastical property must be vested in the State,

which can at any time secularize superfluities to other uses.

Nevertheless these two writers are yet united, for purposes completely contradictory, in laying down principles that were fatal to the absolutism of feudal society. The Churchman and the doctrinaire philosopher were one in asserting both the rights of democracy and the criminal nature of absolute power. The lawfulness of insurrection was not only admitted but defined as a duty sanctioned by religion. The representative character of all offices and institutions both in Church and State was clearly laid down. The result was seen in the powerful struggle in the fourteenth century between democracy and privilege. But Rienzi, Marcel, Artevelde, John Ball and other champions of freedom were before their age. The story of the unfortunate circumstances through which the sixteenth century saw the set-back of the principles of liberty, and the triumph of absolutism over the nascent institutions of democracy, does not belong to our present purpose. But we must not forget the debt which democracy will always owe to the Churchmen and heretics, who for opposite reasons so clearly enunciated its main principles in the Middle Ages.[1]

As regards liberty of thought there is less to be said. The whole conception was somewhat alien to the times. But we should do well to avoid exaggeration. Scholasticism, at least in its earlier developments, was by no means the crude hair-splitting appeal to mere logic and authority which in its later days it

[1] Marsiglio's *Defensor Pacis* will be found in Goldast's *Monarchia Romani Imperii*, vol. 2 (Hanover, 1612). A good account of Marsiglio will be found in Poole's *Illustrations of the Hist. of Med. Thought* (1885), c. 9. For the growth of the idea of popular sovereignty see Gierke's *Pol. Theories of Middle Ages* (Ed. Maitland, 1900), §§ 6 and 7.

tended to become. The thoughts of Anselm and Abailard move in spheres far above the narrow controversies of the pedants. Though modern science cannot sufficiently express its contempt for the vast superstructure which the schoolmen raised on their narrow and flimsy foundations, nevertheless that strange system was in a true sense preparing the way for the advent of better things. And, within the limits provided, there never was a time, until the Reformation, when considerable liberty of thought and expression was not allowed, especially in the Universities. In our present connexion we should note that the whole intellectual movement of the times centred round the problems of theology. The evils of this narrowed vision none will deny ; nevertheless it bears witness, after its fashion, to the desire for intellectual unity which lies at the root of all knowledge.

In the rapid development in England in the later Middle Ages of the social guilds or fraternities we see more than the growth of democracy. Though originally founded in imitation of the successful craft or trade guilds of London, Bristol, and other great cities, the new guilds had little connexion with trade. Their object was the furtherance of neighbourliness and mutual help. They combined the advantages of a social club with the benefits of insurance and assurance against fire, water, thefts, poverty, disease and death. They undertook for their members the duties now discharged by burial clubs, by hospitals, by almshouses, and by the guardians of the poor. By steadying the price of labour, or by obtaining work for their members they discharged the function of modern trades unions. They discouraged judicial strife by insisting upon their members submitting to arbitration. In some towns, for instance Coventry and York, the

guilds found lodgings and food for poor strangers. In times of special need, when the bridge was broken down, or the steeple in need of repair, the guilds of a town united to carry out the object. They provided dowers for portionless girls; they furnished school fees for promising lads; in some places they maintained schools of their own; on the coast they insured against loss at sea; above all, they made the "Merry England" of our fathers by reason of their incessant Church ales and other festive entertainments, "mummings," miracle-plays, mysteries, and the like. To the joyousness of life they largely contributed by the attention they paid to singing, in many places maintaining a special song-master.

From the first the guilds were strictly associated with the Church. Each guild linked itself on to some special saint or chapel, whose feast-day it kept with processions and banquets, and for whose services it provided candles and funds. The wealthier guilds even maintained chaplains of their own, at the cost of ten marks a year, to offer masses for the quick and the dead. On Corpus Christi day the guilds of a town, especially in a cathedral city, united in a gigantic procession. On the death of any member the whole guild attended his funeral.

The popularity of these guilds, if we may judge from their number and rapid growth, was extraordinary. In London there were at least ninety of them connected with parish churches. There were fifty-five at Lynn. Nor were they confined to the larger towns. There were eight guilds in the little parish of Oxburgh in Norfolk, twelve at Ashburton, and forty-two at Bodmin in Cornwall. By the beginning of the fifteenth century there was scarcely a town or village of any importance without them. Some of

these possessed large endowments. Many included women as well as men. By one of the greatest crimes in history nearly all these guilds were swept away at the Reformation, in a few places a pitiful fragment of the spoils being handed over to the people to establish a school. Even the endowments for the poor were greedily seized by men who built up princely fortunes by the robbery of the parish. But for this great pillage of social funds England to-day would have needed no poor-law, and no school rate.[1] Only slowly are we waking up to the great loss to the life and well-being of the people which has followed the divorce of religion from the corporate life, the reduction of insurances to commercial transactions, of all care for the poor to a matter for the guardians. To the ideals and practice of the mediæval guilds, whose centre in all their attempts to realize brotherhood was the Church, the twentieth century would do well to return.

V

Our debt to the Church must not be measured only by the ethical results, or by the means of their attainment which commend themselves clearly to the twentieth century. The reader too often forgets the evolution, slow and painful, of society and morals, and in consequence neglects, in reading history, to look at progress from the standpoint of that which

[1] The reader interested in the social side of the mediæval guild should study the case of Boston in the *Victoria County History of Lincoln*, vol. ii. From one guild and its pillage he can learn all. The mockery involved in calling schools, "King Edward VI foundations" has been abundantly shown by Mr. Leach in his various educational works.

was attainable in the age in question. When thus considered relatively, forces and tendencies which to-day we should rightly condemn as mischievous, are seen to have been, at their time and for their purpose, potent for good; though the good was not unmixed with evil, and was often pregnant with coming catastrophe. Of this truth the greatest illustration is the rise in the Middle Ages of the papal supremacy, in many respects the most wonderful event in history.

The student who would investigate the part that the Papacy has played in the evolution of society should realize at the outset that the mediæval Church was not so much a Church, in the modern or scriptural sense of the word, as a State. "Convenience," writes Professor Maitland, "may forbid us to call it a State very often, but we ought to do so from time to time, for we could frame no acceptable definition of a State which would not comprehend the Church. What has it not that the State should have? It has laws, lawgivers, law courts, lawyers. It uses physical force to compel men to obey its laws. It keeps prisons. In the thirteenth century, though with squeamish phrases, it pronounces sentence of death. It is no voluntary society. If people attempt to leave it they are guilty of the *crimen laesæ majestatis*, and are likely to be burnt. It is supported by involuntary contributions, by tithe and tax. That men believe it to have a supernatural origin does not alter the case. Kings have reigned by divine right, and republics have been founded in the name of God-given liberty." [1] But the constitution of this State was unique in one all-important respect. This was a State within a

[1] Maitland, *Canon Law in Church of England*, p. 100.

State, a State which had neither boundaries nor limits; which existed in, was part of, and yet distinct from every other State, over the which in fact it claimed priority and pre-eminence.

Herein will be found the secret both of the growth and downfall of the papal supremacy. For the papacy was no gigantic upas tree of fraud and superstition planted and reared by the enemy of mankind, but a necessary factor, so far as we can see, in the evolution of society. The patriarchate of Rome became the supreme power in the mediæval world because Western Europe had been cradled in the belief of the necessity of one world-power, to which all other powers should give adherence and form a part. To this legacy of the Cæsars the popes became the heirs. Amid the chaos and welter of the great upheaval they alone offered unity of administration and law. They won the gratitude of Europe by never flinching from their task of beating down anarchy into order, and asserting the supremacy of moral ideas over brute force. Thus they stood for the solidarity of Europe in one world-state. The virtual downfall of the papacy at the beginning of the fourteenth century was due to the same cause. Men did not throw over the yoke of Boniface VIII because they had ceased to believe in the pope's spiritual pretensions. The Reformation in its first origin was political, not religious; social, not moral; a protest against an all-centralized yet omnipresent world-power, in theory spiritual, in practice secular, which had outlived the conditions of its birth. The imperial idea, which originated with Alexander, but was completed by the Cæsars, was at last exhausted. World-wide administrative centralization, whether secular or spiritual, had ceased to be the ideal. The building up of the nation had begun

to be revealed as the goal of history, at any rate so far as the immediate future was concerned.

Other aspects also of the mediæval Church that to-day excite contempt or pity, possessed considerable influence as civilizing factors in an earlier age. We may illustrate by the doctrine of penitence. With the corollaries of this mediæval doctrine, the system of indulgences on the one hand, and the penitentials on the other, we are all familiar. As regards indulgences —the great abuse of the system,—the chief errors sprung up in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, largely as an outcome of the Crusades, nor was the matter at any time a factor of the greatest importance. It was different with the penitentials. This great instrument for Christianizing barbarian tempers was probably the creation of the Irish Church and in special of Columban. Thence through Theodore of Tarsus and the English prelates the penitentials passed into the general Church of the West.

In condemnation of the principles and methods of the whole system historians are nowadays substantially agreed. Nevertheless, the student should remember the great law illustrated on every page of ecclesiastical history, " that those beliefs or institutions which seem irrational, or absurd, or unworthy of the Christian spirit, have come into vogue in order to kill some deeper evil, not otherwise to have been destroyed."[1] The penitentials were a necessity if the Church was to bring the masses that had nominally passed into the kingdom of Christ, yet remained in many respects heathen at heart, into any real experience of religion. In the mediæval Church, unlike the Church of the first four centuries, baptism came first, oftentimes the

[1] Allen, *Christian Institutions*, p. 408.

baptism of whole races received as they were into the Church of the Empire which they had conquered; training and discipline must needs follow.

Penance, to adopt for this system of discipline the familiar title nowadays somewhat restricted in its application, was thus no mere creation of sacerdotalism, but a response to popular needs, the outcome of the revolution produced by the barbarian invasions. In the decaying Roman world no state save the Church was either strong enough or civilized enough to enforce obedience to moral law, or hold down the usages and reminiscences of heathenism. Her punishments were at first limited to those sanctioned by the pains and fears of the wounded conscience. Unfortunately the Church soon yielded to the Teutonic custom of commuting misdeeds by a money payment, or by means of substitutes. Hence the opening of the door to the abuse of indulgences. In the earlier age the chief defect of the system lay in the fact that punishment bore more hardly on the poor than on the rich, while above all it made sin something arbitrary and external to the soul. The priest also who could release from its punishments on earth, or whose prayers had power with God in the mysterious other world of retribution, took the place of the Christ who could purify the heart. Thus the pope and not the Holy Spirit became the administrator of mercy and pardon. The human race became afraid of dealing directly with God, and sacerdotalism won its long triumph.

The other evils of the system of penance have been often exposed, and are sufficiently familiar. The student of ethics will point out the tendency—always natural to the Roman spirit—to stiffen all morality into legal restrictions, and to confound the inner law with the regulations of the Church. Or he may dwell

on the bands of Flagellants who in times of popular excitement covered the land, stripped to the waist and plying a scourge knotted with iron, the use of which for thirty-three days cleansed the soul from all stains of sin. He may instance the madness of that typical hermit Dominicus Loricatus, who with a broom in each hand and singing psalms, could wipe off, as his friend Damiani relates with pride, a century of guilt within a week. The theologian, finally, will point to the constant haggling and bargaining over the degree of sin and the value of merit, or he may relate the numberless instances of desperate abuse, a chicken or a pint of wine purchasing absolution for the foulest deeds.

These evils should not be minimized ; nor should their exaggeration obscure the real inwardness to the mediæval mind of the doctrine and its corollaries. As Harnack allows, its first effect was the deepening of the sense of sin, though the deepening was counterbalanced in time by the stupefying readiness with which men confessed that they were sinners. Another effect was the formation side by side with the sacramental Christ of the image of the historical Jesus, in the contemplation of whose sufferings Bernard and others found their most passionate exaltation. In the doctrine, first suggested by the English doctor Alexander of Hales, and developed by Thomas Aquinas, of the common treasury of merit out of whose inexhaustible store the pope could dispense to the spiritually destitute, we see another instance of the great mediæval conception of solidarity so unintelligible to latter-day individualism. In everything the social aim predominates ; the duties of life spring out of our unity as a race ; humanity on earth is one in its sufferiugs with humanity in the invisible world. All

this formed part of the education of the race for better things to come.

VI

In the religious life of the Middle Ages the two distinguishing features are the power of the papacy and the strength of Monasticism. The two were mutually dependent. It was by no accident of history that the fall of the one coincided in time with the dissolution of the other. But for the help of Rome the monasteries could not have resisted the attacks of covetous kings; but for the monks the pope would never have succeeded in building up his universal dominion. This was the political side of their work, in reality the least part of their mission; and with this we are not now concerned. On the social side it was given to monasticism to represent in the midst of barbarism an ordered if one-sided life, and moral ideals above the age; and to lay, in the midst of rude and opposing forces, the foundations of a noble civilization.

The origin of Monasticism, the phases through which it passed, its ideals and history, are familiar to our readers, or easily accessible. In the spread of Monasticism we see two strangely contrasted influences working together to change the aspect of Europe. The one was the passion for solitude, the other the desire for fellowship. The passion for solitude drove the saint into the wastes and forests; the desire to imitate his life, and the protection which his foundation could afford turned the lowliest hermitage into a crowded monastery surrounded by a thriving dependency of serfs and tenants. The illustrations of this would be almost as numerous as the monasteries

themselves. Everywhere it was the same; whether by the slopes of the Jura, in the forests of Bavaria, or amidst the wastes of Northumberland. Europe does not always remember the debt which she owes to those who in their longing to escape from the haunts of men, cleared the densest jungle, drained pestilent swamps, and by the alchemy of industry turned the deserts into waving gold. The sanctity of the hermit, drawing after him against his will a brotherhood of disciples, laid the foundation of our busiest towns, broke the silence of waste and fen with a chain of religious houses, set agricultural colonies in the midst of the profoundest forests, or planted on some dreary coast the forerunner of a busy haven.

Not the least result of Monasticism, as developed by St. Benedict in the West, was the change which the movement brought into men's conceptions of the dignity of toil. In the degenerate Roman world, as among the rude barbarian conquerors, manual labour had been exclusively reserved for slaves. But in the Rule of Benedict manual labour formed an indispensable part in the life of every monk, however noble his birth. "This is a fine occupation for a count," sarcastically exclaimed Duke Godfrey of Lorraine when he found his brother Frederick washing dishes in the kitchen of the monastery. "You are right, duke," was the answer; "I ought indeed to think myself honoured by the smallest service for the Master." Such tales might be multipled indefinitely; we may smile at them, but their value is not the less great. They witness to the elevation of labour into new esteem, the commencement of that organized social industry which in later years was to destroy feudalism itself and shift the centre of power to the producer and toiler.

Of almost equal value with the exaltation of labour was the emphasis laid by Monasticism upon the virtues of humility and obedience; from the monastic standpoint the two tend to become one, related as cause and effect. Hitherto obedience had been learned in one school alone—for we may neglect the obedience of the slave,—the school of the army. Now men were taught by a discipline other than military that the highest type of life is that which learns to obey. It is difficult to exaggerate the value of this lesson in the peculiar circumstances of the times. Amid the dissolution of old society and the ascendency of the barbarians, the lesson was once more enforced of the old obedience which had made Rome great, but in a purer and more spiritual form. With all deductions that may be made for an exaggeration of obedience into a servile degradation of will—a tendency that we see issuing finally in Jesuitism—or even into a negation of self-respect, we should not ignore the value to civilization in its turbulent youth of the Church proposing for the reverence of mankind a life of obedience as the highest ideal of virtue.

We must not forget that Monasticism attracted the lay world as well as the clerics of the Church to its own ideal, though in an entirely different way. From the twelfth century onwards we find a number of half-monastic orders, Teutonic Knights, Hospitallers, Tertiaries of St. Francis, Beguines, brotherhoods and the rest. The life of every town was leavened with these half-ascetic clubs, which besides enabling the layman to do something for the salvation of his own soul, undoubtedly developed obedience and civil order, and fostered a spirit of charity and altruism.

From any estimate of the benefits of Monasticism certain deductions must be made. The over insist-

ence upon asceticism was not for the good of humanity, and led to some extent to a weakening of home ties. From the standpoint of race continuation and development the result was in part disastrous. Celibacy doomed the holiest and most intellectual to sterility; the future was left to those of coarser clay. Monasticism was also responsible for a certain lowering of civic virtues. By their very constitution as an order the monks were cosmopolitans. As a result they were also largely anti-national. They formed a State within a State, an ecclesiastical internationalism whose head centre was Rome. The sole care of the monk was too often the welfare of his monastery, and the spread of his order. The organized socialism of which at one time the monasteries were the truest exponents became, too often, a struggle for individual wealth on the part of prior or abbot. But when all deductions have been made the balance of our debt to Monasticism is incalculable; nor is it the less that the system, like other institutions, outlived its usefulness, and became a curse where at one time it had been a blessing.

VII

As yet in our investigation we have said nothing as to the influence of the Reform Movements of the Middle Ages; we have confined ourselves to the action of the Church. To us of a later age the mediæval Reformations, or attempts at Reformation, loom large; to the men of the times they were not of the highest moment. As students of history we see them in their right perspective, and hail their scattered rays as the dawn of a new day; we salute their preachers as the heralds of a better age. But the men of the

time saw in them little but unreasoning revolt, and, on the whole, their influence, social and otherwise, was not so great as sometimes we imagine. But such as it was it demands attention.

Mediæval reform movements may be roughly classified as follows. (i.) Those which aimed at a reformation of the Church from within, by a stricter observance of its primitive law and spirit, and a purging of the whole in head and members. (ii.) Those which protested against the suppression by Rome of all independence. These aimed at lessening the excessive internationalism of the Church, and at the development of a strong local feeling by the emphasis of nationalism in ritual, government and language. These two objects or causes of religious revolt often tended to become one, as in the case of the Hussite movement in Bohemia. But, in the case of the reform movement which culminated at Constance, the strong desire for amendment in head and members was really vitiated and made of no account by the new spirit of nationalism which we find so rampant in the Council itself.[1] (iii.) The movements of reform or revolt which originated in a deep belief in evangelical poverty as the *sine quâ non* of all spiritual life. (iv.) Protests against the excessive sacerdotalism of the times, especially against its *causa causans*, the doctrine of transubstantiation. But the objections to transubstantiation of Wyclif and others scarcely fall within the plan of this chapter; they are theological rather than social.

The best work of the mediæval Church lay, no doubt, in the reformations which may be classed as from within; the coming in the early years of the

[1] See my *Dawn of the Reformation*, vol. ii. chap. v. for the fuller proof of this.

thirteenth century of the Friars under St. Francis and St. Dominic, the Conciliar movement of the fourteenth century which led to Constance (1415), or, to go back to an earlier age, the great reform of the Church associated with the name of Hildebrand. But the bearing of these movements upon social development has been sufficiently considered already in connexion with the work of the Church, of which in fact they were the strongest advocates and supports. As regards the protest against the suppression of the national feeling, or revolts which sprang from the new consciousness of nationalism, it is needless to write at length. In these, as for instance in the Hussite revolt, which began in the constant struggle between Czech and Teuton, we find the birth of that new spirit which was to prove dominant, for weal or woe, at the Reformation itself. But such movements were of greater influence upon the politics than the morals of the times. In Bohemia, to cite one illustration, the influence of Hus upon the development of its national spirit is undying; his contribution to the permanent moral and religious uplifting of his nation has been but slight.

The revolts which may be classified under (iii.) or (iv.) often tended to run the one into the other. For our present purpose they are of far greater importance than the orthodox reformations which fall under (i.) and (ii.). These latter reformations, because they were orthodox, added little save revived zeal or wider horizons to the moral and social ideals of the Church. The unorthodox reformations, on the contrary, corrected many errors or exaggerations of mediæval method and aim, oftentimes it must be confessed by over emphasis of the contrary.

The revolts which originated in the protest of enthusiasts against the wealth of the Church, and which

proclaimed the need of evangelical poverty, were almost continuous from the twelfth century to the Reformation. They assumed many forms and different names, but underlying all is the same spirit. Whether called Henricians, Patarines, Waldensians, Poor Men of Lyons, or Lollards; whether deriving their origin from Joachimists, Spirituals, Fraticelli and the like; whether they looked to the writings of Wyclif, or to the *Introduction to the Eternal Gospel* of Gherardo da Borgo San Donnino;—their doctrines are fundamentally allied; the tendency to identify poverty and perfection, to take from the Church its endowments and to bestow them on the poor, or devote them to the resources of the State. On their political side these revolts mark the rise of a new democracy; the leaders of the one were often the leaders in the other. The Spiritual Franciscans, especially, joined their devotion to the poverty of their founder with an enthusiasm for new philosophies, new heresies, and new social movements that was always driving them into conflict with either Church or State. A wave of democratic agitation was sweeping over Europe; a fierce struggle between reason and authority was working its way to the surface in the sphere of politics as well as of belief. For in that age all revolutions were naturally religious in origin and character, while all reformation led of necessity to social revolution.

The illustrations of this union of democracy and reformation are many, in every century from the twelfth onward. We may mention in the first half of the twelfth century Henry of Lausanne, a monk of Clugny, barefooted, carrying a cross in his hand, attacking the corruptions of the Church with such earnestness that a dozen towns have boycotted their clergy; this at a time when St. Bernard rules Europe

for orthodoxy from his cell at Clairvaux. In the towns of Italy at the same time this revolt against authority, allied with the reaction of the Christian consciousness against a worldly Church, took the special form of a struggle to shake off the yoke of feudalism, both civic and spiritual. The twelfth century witnessed the rise of the free republics of Lombardy and Tuscany. In Rome that remarkable reformer, Arnold of Brescia, used the local disaffection to advance his dreams of a nobler Utopia.

If Abailard was the incarnation of the new spirit which in the twelfth century claimed for itself freedom of thought, in Arnold of Brescia, the pupil and companion of Abailard, we find the leader in the new claim for freedom of will. His life will serve as an excellent example of the union in the Middle Ages of democracy with the preaching of evangelical poverty. Born at Brescia, Arnold on his return from his studies in Paris plunged into the struggles of the citizens against their bishops. Brescia was a seat of the Patarines, and Arnold, though in theology most orthodox, added fuel to the flames of heresy and patriotism by his invectives against the worldliness of the priests. The possession of property, he maintained, was contrary to Christianity ; he urged the secularization of the estates of the Church. Clerical wealth should be escheated to the commune ; henceforth the ministers of religion should depend on the voluntary tithes of the people. His teaching suited both the politics and pockets of the market-place. All Lombardy was stirred with wild expectation in which it would be difficult to say whether the hope of plunder or reform was the dominant motive. After various adventures in 1147, we meet him at Rome preaching his favourite doctrines to a democracy which needed no persuasion. The purity of his life,

the high morality of his teaching appealed to the few ; the many were reached by the fiery eloquence with which a man clothed in a monk's robe and worn with fasting preached in the peasant's tongue apostolic poverty in priest and pope. Arnold's ideal was of a great Christian republic, in which the existing feudalism should give place to the sovereignty of the people, to whom should belong the vast estates of the Church ; much the same idea as was afterwards more clearly enunciated by Marsiglio. Triumphant democracy would possess all the virtues and none of the wrongs of the systems it would replace ; it would usher in an era of true religion, for which the world sought in vain in existing ecclesiastical organizations.

In many respects Arnold was an unpractical dreamer. As we look back upon his ideals and remember that he attempted to realize these among the ignorant and oppressed lower classes of the twelfth century, our admiration of his daring is only equalled by our astonishment that he should mistake the transitory intoxication of the Romans for religious and moral conviction. Nevertheless his memory should be reverenced. The world has too few prophets for us to despise one

> Who rowing hard against the stream,
> Saw distant gates of Eden gleam
> And did not dream it was a dream.

In 1155 Arnold, a true martyr for freedom, was hanged and burned, and his ashes thrown into the Tiber by Pope Adrian IV, the one Englishman who ever occupied the papal chair.

The life of Arnold is typical. We find its details repeated, *mutatis mutandis*, in every country and century. In the thirteenth century for a few years we see the cessation of revolt, but this was only

because for a few years we see the triumph, or fancied triumph, of democracy and piety in the person of St. Francis. With the loss of his ideal the old struggle once more breaks out; but in every case the leaders of the people in their battle for freedom are the preachers of the need of apostolic poverty. In England we have an illustration of this in the case of the Peasants' Revolt. At the back of this great revolt we find the friars, who had for years been preaching to the people "that all things should be in common," as we learn from Langland. Though Wyclif's direct influence upon this revolt was slight, nevertheless his communistic ideas, reported secondhand by his Biblemen, or distorted by men indifferent to their subtle and unworkable distinctions,[1] had not been without their effect. The Peasants' Revolt, though far from being a communistic movement, was but the rude translation into a world of practice of a theory of "dominion" that destroyed the "lordship" of the wicked and exalted possession into the inalienable right of the saint.[2]

Wyclif's arguments are obscured by being expressed in the definitions and distinctions of a decaying feudalism. Like most schoolmen Wyclif starts with an ideal state of society: "all authority is founded in grace." "Lordship" rests with God alone, who as Suzerain of the world hath allotted "dominion" to popes and kings in fief and tenure of their obedience to Himself. Of this feudal tenure "from the Lord in chief" mortal sin is a breach, and in itself "incurs forfeiture"—a doctrine bound to lead to anarchical consequences if Wyclif had applied his conclusions to existing society. But he saved himself by a curious

[1] For illustrations see *Chronicon Angliæ* (Rolls. Series) 282, 340.

[2] Wyclif's political theories are best seen in his *De Dominio*. For an analysis see Poole, *Med. Thought*, 290–306.

metaphysical juggle. He carefully distinguishes between "dominion," which belongs alone to the righteous man, and "power," which the wicked may have by God's permission in consequence of the Fall. In thus building up society upon the Fall, Wyclif followed the usual mediæval theories. Thomas Aquinas alone had discerned that social instincts are an essential part of man's moral constitution.

The natural corollary of this doctrine of "dominion" is the defence of Christian socialism. Communism is with him the translation into reality of his main thesis that "every righteous man is lord over the whole sensible world"; "the faithful man"—Wyclif is quoting Proverbs xvii. 6—"hath the whole world of riches, but the unfaithful man hath not even a farthing!" In his scheme "lordship" is thus always linked with service; the two are corresponding terms, as the most exalted of all potentates acknowledges by his title of *Servus Servorum*. Thus "rights" and "duties" become equivalent and interchangeable. But Wyclif was not ignorant that his ideal society is not yet capable of realization. He is careful to insist that the righteous must not attempt to acquire their inalienable rights by force.

With Wyclif's revolt on its political, scholastic, and theological sides we are not here concerned. But whatever judgement may be passed upon his political theory of "dominion," or his Erastian ideal of reformation, not even his bitterest opponent can deny Wyclif's intense love of, and sympathy with, the poor. To Wyclif the *Epistle of St. James* would be rather the marrow of the Gospel than "an epistle of straw," but then Wyclif's sympathy with and understanding of the poor was deeper than that of Luther. Their needs are at all times uppermost in his thoughts. His

sorrow for their woes runs through his works like a wail of love, and redeems his fiercest denunciations, his most impossible schemes. Half his writings might be compressed into his bitter cry: "Poor men have naked sides, and dead walls have great plenty of waste gold.[1] Wyclif, in fact, had he not been hampered by his scholastic training, might have figured in the Roman calendar as a second St. Francis. In more than one of his doctrines the critic may discern resemblance to the teaching of the saint of Assisi. His "poor priests" were a revival of the "Little Brothers." He constantly speaks as if poverty were the duty of the whole Church. But we miss the sweetness and light, the radiant joyousness, the absence of all aggressiveness save love, which make the Italian immortal. The very fierceness of Wyclif's attacks upon the degenerate friars of his age witnesses to his kinship with them. He hated them with all the hatred which an earnest man feels for those who have degraded his ideal or disappointed his hopes. But these attacks should not blind us to Wyclif's spiritual lineage. The Reformer was, in fact, "the genuine descendant of the friars, turning their wisdom against themselves, and carrying out the principles he had learned from them to their legitimate political conclusions."[2] Perhaps it would be more accurate to classify him with the Spiritual Friars, whose ideas and phraseology he in part assimilated[3]; though, with English common sense, he abandoned their apocalyptic ravings.

Before we pass away from Wyclif it is of interest

[1] Matthews, *Eng. Works of Wyclif*, 91. *Select Eng. Works*, iii. 170.

[2] Brewer, *Monumenta Franciscana*, i. p. lix.

[3] Cf. Wyclif, *Dominio Divino*, 5 n. 15; also *Select English Works*, iii. 212, and especially iii. 304 (very doubtful if by Wyclif), 360, i. 314.

to note one matter of doctrine in which Wyclif's intense social sympathies lead him to a conclusion unusual in a mediæval. We refer to the strong appreciation which Wyclif shows of the real humanity of Jesus, especially in his treatise *de Benedicta Incarnatione*. Here he claims that Christ is the universal man identical with all His brethren. The "literal reality of Christ's human nature is a most precious jewel" which he will not surrender; Christ and His humanity must never be divided. This identification of Christ and the *communis homo* is not merely due to Wyclif's scholastic Realism; it marks rather that intense sympathy for suffering humanity, so characteristic of the Reformer, which led him to the same conclusion as in the first century it had led the writer of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*.

We note the same emphasis of humanity in Wyclif's Lollard disciples. We see this in the protest of Purvey, Wyclif's assistant in the translation of the Bible, against all crusades: "Certes, as long as heathen men will live peaceably with us Christians, and not war on us to destroy our Christendom, we have no authority of God to war against them"; and in his plea, rather, for foreign missions: "A true successor of St. Peter should rather grant indulgences to suffer pains meekly, to convert heathen men." Pilgrimages, if made at all, should be "made only unto the poor"; "it were better to deal money unto poor folk than to offer to the image of Christ."[1] "If ye desire," said Margery Baxter (1428) "to see the true Cross of Christ, I will show it you at home in your own house. Then the said Margery, stretching out her arms abroad said: This is the true Cross of Christ, and this cross

[1] Foxe (ed. Pratt), iii. 597; iv. 133. Purvey, *Remonstrance*, 23, 25, 58, 64, 66.

thou oughtest and mayest every day behold and worship in thine own house ; and therefore it is but vain to run to the church to worship dead crosses." Similar answers were given by Sir John Oldcastle and other Lollards. Said the heroic William Thorpe in his examination before Archbishop Arundel in 1407, when giving his reasons why images ought not to be worshipped in any wise : " Man that was made after the image and likeness of God is full worshipful in his kind ; yea, and this holy image, that is man, God worshippeth [*respecteth*]." To the same effect was the testimony of John Edmunds (1521) : " This John Edmunds talking with the said Baker of pilgrimage bade him offer his money to the image of God. When the other asked what that was, he said that the image of God was the poor people, blind and lame." Many other like illustrations could be given how the Lollards cared more for " preventing the sufferings of Christ's people " than for " picturing to themselves the bodily pain, long since passed, of one Person." [1]

But the greatest service of the Lollard and other mediæval heretics and reformers lay in the emphasis they placed upon the right of individual judgment. They demanded " the liberty of prophesying " which in the next age was to give power to the Reformation. Above all they taught men how to die for their faith and conscience. Though in their days they lived without influence, and died without respect, they have since seen of the travail of their souls and are satisfied.

* * * * *

We have finished our survey of the influence of the Church on the social and ethical development of the Middle Ages—from Gregory the Great to the later

[1] Ruskin, *Lectures on Art*, 71–6 ; with which compare Foxe (ed. Pratt), iii. 594, 265 ; iv. 238. Wyclif, *Select English Works*, iii. 463.

Lollards. The vast extent of the period covered has precluded all but the most cursory examination, and many matters of interest have, perforce, been omitted. With all its defects—and the reverse side of the page may well fill us with indignation—the mediæval Church presents a noble spectacle of moral grandeur, and of true work done for humanity. That many of the forces and institutions which in their day ministered to righteousness in a later age became positive hindrances, the clearing away of which was necessary for further development, is only in harmony with the known laws of progress. That they without us should not be made perfect is not the condemnation of the hope of those who have gone before, but the providential law of evolution.

VIII

The Social Principles and Effects of the Reformation

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ARGUMENT.

Preliminary—Difficulties involved in the Treatment of the Subject—(1) The Danger of Subjectivism—(2) The Social Question not a Prominent Issue with the Reformers—(3) The Different Meanings attached to the term Reformation and the Need of Definition—(4) The Difficulty of Separating the Religious from other Influences at Work during the Period.

I. The Social Teaching of the First Reformers and its Effects.

(*A*) Luther, His Fundamental Position—The Peasant Revolt—Its Causes—The Programme of the Peasants—The Attitude of Luther—His Vindictive Pamphlet—Effect of Luther's Action on the Reformation and on Germany—Luther's Attitude to the New Commercial Spirit.

(*B*) Calvin—Differences between Luther and Calvin—The Condition of Geneva—The Fundamental Principles Underlying Calvin's Work—The Attempt to Establish a Theocracy—The Relation between Church and State—The Relation between the Individual and the Community—Knox's Attempt to Establish Calvin's Regime in Scotland—His Social Programme—The Influence of the Reformation on the Struggle for Independence in the Netherlands.

II. The Indirect Effects of the Reformation on Social Progress.

The Indirect and Ultimate Effects more Important than the Immediate Results—The Influence of the Reformation Seen—(*a*) in the introduction of a New Conception of Life and the Overthrow of the Monastic Ideal; (*b*) the Consecration of Family Life; (*c*) a New Sanctity attached to Labour, Commerce and Civic Life; (*d*) the Conception of a Social Ideal; (*e*) The Reformation Enhances the sense and value of Personality; (*f*) It fosters the Spirit of Intellectual Freedom; (*g*) Its Influence on Political and Social Liberty and (*h*) on the Growth of Democracy; (*i*) It Revolutionizes the Conception of Charity and (*j*) Gives a new Stimulus to Education; (*k*) the Reformation and the Middle Classes; (*l*) Socialistic Theories in the Reformation Period; (*m*) Certain losses entailed by the abandonment of the Mediaeval Dream of Unity and the Introduction of the Commercial Spirit.

VIII

The Social Principles and Effects of the Reformation

It is by no means an easy task to gauge with anything like scientific precision the exact contribution which the Reformation made to the social progress of the race. There are many difficulties which such an investigation is bound to surmount before it can hope to reach a satisfactory result.

In the first place we must strive to guard against the danger which is incidental to all such inquiries of unconsciously imposing our own ideas and judgments upon the data of history. "History," as Froude once said, "is like a child's box of letters. You can make it spell whatever you please." There is no region in which the dictum—"the mind sees what it brings with it the power of seeing"—is better illustrated than in the philosophy of history. It will therefore be absolutely necessary for us to guard our selves against hasty generalizations, especially when the generalization is in accord with our own wishes.

Then again a difficulty arises from the fact that the social question was not one of the most prominent issues at the time of the Reformation. Democracy

had not yet realized itself. There was, of course, grave discontent among the peasantry of Europe, and serious outbreaks occurred in Germany, England and Bohemia; but it cannot be said that the social problem filled the thought and imagination of the age as it does to-day. The Reformation was pre-eminently a spiritual movement. Its main purpose was to emancipate religion from the tyranny of the Roman Church. It was only incidentally, here and there, that it was brought face to face with definite social issues. Whatever contribution therefore the Reformation made to social reform was in the nature of a by-product, and cannot be regarded as part of the original purpose of the movement.

Furthermore, before we can hope to reach convincing results, it will be necessary to define the meaning which we attach to the term "Reformation." The word is used in many different senses. To some minds it simply denotes the results achieved by Luther in Germany during his lifetime. Others regard it as signifying primarily the changes introduced by Henry VIII in the relations between the English Church and the Papacy. To others the work of Calvin at Geneva constitutes the real Reformation. Our conclusions are bound to vary with our definition. As a matter of fact the most diverse results have been obtained by scholars in the past. Lord Acton, for instance, in his *History of Freedom* asserts that "The direct political influence of the Reformation effected less than has been supposed. . . . When the last of the Reformers died, religion instead of emancipating the nations had become an excuse for the criminal art of despots. Calvin preached and Bellarmine lectured, but Machiavelli reigned." In striking contrast to this statement of Lord Acton, we have the affirma-

tion of M. Borgeaud in his *Rise of Democracy*, "Modern democracy is the child of the Reformation." Now Lord Acton and M. Borgeaud are both of them right. The difference in their conclusions is due to the fact that the former rigidly limits the Reformation to the lifetime of the Reformers, while the latter includes the Puritan movement of the seventeenth century in the scope of the Reformation. In the present essay the Reformation will be taken in the broadest sense of the term. To limit it to the work of the first Reformers is to take an unduly narrow and circumscribed view of history. Luther and Calvin only laid the foundations, and it was two hundred years before the full effects of the movement began to be realized. We must regard the Reformation, therefore, as including all the new spiritual forces which were generated in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the effort to break down the superstition and tyranny of the Papal authority.

Finally, we have to remember that there were other forces at work during this period besides the religious. There was, for instance, the Renaissance, which re-introduced the social and political ideals of ancient Greece and Rome. Great changes, too, were taking place in the world of commerce. The development of navigation and the discovery of America had broadened the basis of trade. A new order of merchant princes was beginning to arise. Wealth no longer necessarily meant the possession of land. The economic condition of Europe was steadily being revolutionized. The Feudal System was ceasing to be the pivot of society. The profitable employment of money in trade enhanced the value of capital. With all these influences at work, it is extremely difficult to disentangle any single strand from the complicated

thread of causation and estimate its particular effect upon the social development which ensued. To take an illustration. We know that between the time of Wyclif and the death of Queen Elizabeth the wages of agricultural labourers doubled in England, and as Prof. J. R. Green says, " villeinage died out so rapidly that it became a rare and antiquated thing." Our first impulse would naturally be to attribute this result to the new religious ideas introduced by the Reformation. We are bound, however, to take into consideration the other influences which were at work, and we must never forget the economic fact that the Black Death had swept off half the population of the rural districts, and so made labour scarce. Even in feudal times, in spite of the safeguards provided by Parliament in the interests of the feudal lords, a depletion of the labour market was inevitably followed by an advance in the status and wages of the labourer. It would be as unscientific to ascribe the amelioration in the condition of the labouring classes entirely to the propaganda of Wyclif and the Lollards, as it would be to deny altogether the part which the new religious ideas played in creating what Thorold Rogers called " the golden age " of the English peasant in the fifteenth century.

Keeping these difficulties in mind, we can now proceed to the examination of the facts. It will be necessary first of all to investigate the principles laid down by the great Reformers on the subject of Social Reform, and the direct effects produced by the movement in different countries; and then, when this has been done, we shall be in a position to estimate the larger and more general influences which the Reformation generated in the sphere of social and civic life.

I

It will be impossible, of course, to survey all the different religious movements in connexion with the Reformation. We shall have to confine ourselves in the main to an examination of the teaching of Luther and Calvin, though some allusion must also be made to the work of John Knox in Scotland, and the great struggle for religious liberty in the Netherlands. We find that though the various movements which make up the Reformation have much in common, yet they have many points of difference as well. The doctrines of the new faith were in their essence the same all over Europe; but in spite of the common basis, no two movements assumed the same form or issued in the same results. The different shapes which the Reformation assumed in different places were due partly to the temperament of the leaders and partly to the social and political environment in which the battle had to be fought out.

A. The Social Teaching of Luther.

Luther was from the first pre-eminently concerned with the religious question. The problem for him had always been, "How can a man be just with God?" After a desperate struggle he had found the answer which satisfied his own soul, and he was anxious to give that answer to the world. The main point for Luther was the establishment of a right relationship between man and God. The question of the right relationship between man and man never concerned him very deeply. He felt that if men could be induced to accept the doctrine of justification by faith and enter into a life of fellowship with God, the regeneration of society would naturally [illegible]. "Save

the individual, and by saving the individual you will save the State"—that was the watchword of the Lutheran Reformation. Luther was therefore anxious to keep the movement from being entangled in any social or political complications. In this policy however he was doomed to fail.

At a very early stage in its development the German Reformation was brought face to face with a grave social crisis. The Peasants' Revolt in 1524 made it necessary for Luther to decide once for all whether the movement should ally itself with the forces of democracy in their struggle for freedom, or whether it should support the ruling classes in their effort to maintain the old feudal order.

It is impossible within the limits of the present Essay to attempt to describe all the issues which were involved in the Peasants' Revolt. For fifty years and more the German peasantry had been seething with unrest. Economic changes had been taking place all over Europe which amounted to little less than an agrarian revolution. The discovery had been made that land possessed a commercial value. In former days the feudal lord was perfectly contented if the land provided him with men to serve him in husbandry or war. Now he became anxious to make money out of the soil. The common lands were gradually enclosed. The produce of the woods and the rivers, which in the past had been regarded as common property, was appropriated by the lord of the manor. The introduction of Roman Law, too, altered for the worse the agricultural customs and usages which had prevailed in Germany for ages, and lowered the status of the labourer. The growing love of luxury led the rich to seek increased sources of revenue by grinding the faces of the poor. The

exactions of the Church grew more burdensome every year. The tithes were extended to cover every possible source of income. A steady rise in prices and a consequent diminution in the value of money served to intensify the sense of poverty. A series of bad harvests added to the sufferings of the peasants. Time after time insurrections had been organized by the *Bundshuh*, as the Peasants' league was called. None of them however had proved successful, and they had always been suppressed without difficulty.

The Reformation with its attack upon the Church and its proclamation of religious liberty gave the peasants a new hope and added fuel to the flames. Some of the more radical reformers like Münzer openly espoused the cause of the peasants and carried the fiery cross of rebellion throughout the southern part of Germany. At length in 1524 the great insurrection broke out. The demands of the peasants, which were incorporated in twelve Articles, seem to us to-day extremely moderate. They were couched in religious phraseology and supported by arguments drawn from the Scriptures. The peasants commenced by claiming in the first article the right to elect their own pastors and religious teachers. They made no objection to the payment of the greater tithes, but they argued that the lesser tithes were unscriptural and rested merely on human authority. They demanded the restitution of the privilege enjoyed by their forefathers of hunting in the common woods and fishing in the rivers. They protested against every form of slavery as being contrary to the teaching of the New Testament and demanded exemption from all servile services. They asked also for a reduction of rent and the abolition of the death duties exacted by the landlord.

The programme of the peasants offered Luther a great opportunity. Their fate was very largely in his hands. He was one of the determining factors in the situation. The issue of the revolt was in no small degree settled by his decision. There can be little doubt that at heart Luther was largely in sympathy with the peasants. He came himself of peasant stock and knew from bitter experience the wrongs by which they were oppressed. In his earlier writings he had lashed out bravely against the misgovernment of the princes and the luxury of the rich. At the first appearance of the peasants' programme, he adopted a neutral attitude towards the two contending parties, distributing praise and blame with impartial hand. He expressed approval of most of the peasants' demands and urged the nobles to remove the grievances. At the same time he warned the peasants that a resort to violence would be fatal to their claims. It seems quite clear that he was anxious to secure a compromise, which might ameliorate the lot of the peasants without injuring the nobles.

When the peasants, unable to secure a bloodless revolution, resorted to the sword, Luther abandoned the position of neutrality, flung himself wildly into the fray and put himself forward as the champion of the nobles. His pamphlet *Against the murderous thieving hordes of peasants* is a disgrace (there is no other word for it) to literature, to say nothing of religion. Luther dipped his pen in venom and openly incited the nobles to butchery. "A prince can now," he wrote, "better merit heaven with bloodshed than with prayer." A perfect orgy of slaughter followed. No less than a hundred thousand peasants, on the lowest computation, were slain with the sword. The

agricultural districts of Southern Germany became little better than a wilderness.

Many attempts have been made to extenuate the action of Luther. The moderate programme of the twelve articles, it is urged, was only a blind. The real aims of the *Bundshuh* stopped very little short of Socialism. Moreover the success of the peasants would have meant revolution, and for that Luther was not prepared. Luther knew too that the success of the Reformation would be imperilled if it were associated with the movement. He would have inevitably lost the support of the German princes and nobles upon whose help he relied in his struggle with the Pope. The risk was too great. Luther had really no alternative but to sacrifice the peasants in the interests of the Reformation.

Arguments such as these would have justified Luther in adopting a policy of neutrality, but they do not justify his vindictive onslaught upon the peasants; least of all do they afford ground for his enunciation of the barbarous doctrine "Killing No Murder." Luther's pamphlet, as Dr. Lindsay says, "all extenuating circumstances being taken into account, must ever remain an ineffaceable stain on his noble life and career."

Luther's action left an indelible mark upon his own character, upon the constitution of the Lutheran Church, and upon the German nation. There can be little doubt that Luther's own social sympathies were dulled and blunted by his partisan conduct. He had violated the principle of political neutarlity which lay at the very base of his religious conceptions. He had taken sides with the nobles against the people. There was no escaping from the position. As time went on, his sentiments became less and less demo-

cratic. No one, who had not lost his finer instincts, could ever have written the notorious letter which Luther composed later on, in conjunction with Melanchthon and Spalatin, to remove the scruples of a Saxon noble in regard to the burdens his tenants bore, in which he gives utterance to the astounding statement, "The ass *will* have blows and the people *will* be ruled by force." The effect upon the constitution of the Lutheran Church was equally detrimental. It was thrown more and more into the hands of the princes. As Professor Pollard says, "The movement from 1521 to 1525 had been national, and Luther had been its hero: from the position of national hero, he now sank to be the prophet of a sect and a sect which depended for its existence upon the support of political powers. Melanchthon admitted that the decrees of the Lutheran Church were mere platonic conclusions without the support of the princes, and Luther suddenly abandoned his views on the freedom of conscience and the independence of the Church." But most disastrous of all was the effect produced upon the German nation. The peasants were alienated from Protestantism and relapsed, some back into Roman Catholicism but the majority into unbelief. The cause of Social Reform was handicapped, and it took centuries before it recovered from the blow which Luther dealt it. "To the end of the eighteenth century the German peasantry remained the most miserable in Europe. Serfdom lingered there longer than in any other civilized country save Russia, and the mass of the people were effectively shut out from the sphere of political action." The anti-Christian character of modern Socialism in Germany is one of the fruits of Luther's policy.

Little need be said with regard to Luther's atti-

tude upon other social questions. Reference, however, should be made to his hostility towards the methods of the new Commerce. In one of his works he protests against the doctrine that a merchant "must buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest," and insists that the only justifiable rule is "I may sell my wares as dearly as I ought, or as is right and just." "Selling shall not be a work which stands freely in your power, without all law and measure, as though you were a god, who is bound to no one: but because your selling is a work which you do to your neighbour, it shall be conducted with such law and conscience that you may do it without harm and injury to your neighbour." Luther suggested that the magistrates should appoint a commission to establish just and fair prices, though he adds that he thought there was very little prospect of such a plan being carried out.

Luther's most vehement denunciations, however, are reserved for the great trading societies and bankers, such as the Fuggers, who in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries amassed huge fortunes by financial and commercial operations. The lending and borrowing of money at interest were anathema to Luther. His indignation against the Monopolists is almost as violent as his attack upon the peasants. "These people are not worthy of being called men or dwelling among people. It would be right for the magistracy to take from such all that they have and drive them from the land." In one of his extant letters written at a time of famine when an attempt was being made by the nobles to make a corner in wheat, Luther makes an urgent appeal to the Elector John Frederic to pass a law "to prevent the nobles from trading in corn and thereby practising usury in such a shameless

manner." But it was not merely the abuses connected with commerce that Luther hated: he disliked the thing itself. "It were more godly," he says in his *Address to the Nobility*, "to encourage agriculture and lessen commerce." "Germany would be better off," he writes elsewhere, "if she spent less of her gold in buying cloth from England and spice from Spain."

It would not be far from the truth to say that Luther's social ideal was an improved Feudal System. He was anxious that Germany should return to the old simple agricultural life. The commercial spirit was an unmitigated disaster in his eyes. The fact is of course that Luther was essentially conservative in all his instincts, and his innate Conservatism is never more apparent than in his attitude to social questions. He began his public career by opening the floodgates of reform, and then, frightened at the results, spent the rest of his life in the vain attempt to build a dam to stem the torrent.

B. The Social Teaching of Calvin.

When we pass from Germany to Switzerland, we find ourselves in a completely different atmosphere. Switzerland was a federation of a number of free and independent republics. Each of the great city-states was autonomous and responsible for the conduct of its own government. The social problem was much less acute than in Germany. The peasants had already won their freedom, and many of the evils which were so rampant in other countries had been mitigated if not entirely removed. Calvin, therefore, when he came to Geneva, stood at a great advantage in comparison with Luther. Luther's stage

was a large empire with many complex political fo
confronting him at every turn. He could only h
to succeed by winning over the most potent elem
to his side. Calvin's stage, on the other hand, wa
moderate sized city, the population of which is estima
at 12,000. As long as he was able to dominate the c
there was little fear of outside interference. Luth
only way of safety was to keep the Reformation cl
of politics, and to avoid the social problem as far
possible. Calvin could only hope to make his inf
ence felt by incarnating his ideal of reform in
institutions of his city. And even if he had wish
to follow Luther's example and avoid interference
political and social questions, it would have be
quite impossible for him to do it at Geneva. Gene
had always been in theory at any rate a theocrac
Its bishop was nominally its king, though his pow
was limited by the Vicedom or civil overlord (wh
was always a member of the House of Savoy), an
the assembly of the citizens. As a matter of fact, th
bishop was the creature and nominee of the Duke
Savoy, who by using him as his instrument strov
with more or less success to impose his will upon th
people of Geneva. "Duke and bishop," as a chronicl
says, "like Herod and Pilate stood united agains
the city." In 1530 Geneva emancipated itself fro
the "two-headed tyranny" which sought to destro
its liberties. In regaining its political freedom it wo
religious freedom as well, and six years later, in 153
the city publicly proclaimed its acceptance of th
Reformation. Within two months of this event Ca
vin obeyed the summons of Farel, and essayed t
making Geneva a City of God, a real the
hould be a model to the world.
t so much concerned with the de

Calvin's work in Geneva as with the underlying ciples upon which it was based, and with those nly only in so far as they bear upon the social stion. The leading principles of Calvin's régime y be stated thus: (1) Religion, though essentially sonal, must work itself out in the social and polit- life of the people. Germany under the guidance Luther might adopt a new faith, and leave its old tem of government and its social order intact and altered. But Geneva under the leadership of Cal- could not be content with that. The reform of igion must be followed by a reform of morals and reform of civic life. Christianity must dominate e body politic as well as the individuals of which e state is composed. It must be woven into the ry warp of the fabric of society. (2) The Chris- anization of the state can only be produced by the tablishment of a theocracy. The establishment of theocracy means the recognition of the law of God s the supreme standard and basis of the civic life. he function of the government is to devise means y which this ideal can be attained. The particular orm of government, according to the teaching of alvin, is immaterial. A theocratic state may be uled by a monarchy—an aristocracy—or a demo- racy. Each has its advantages and its disadvan- ages. "Monarchy easily degenerates into despotism, ristocracy into oligarchy or the faction of the few, emocracy into mobocracy and sedition." Calvin's wn preference is for a democracy tempered by a ixture of aristocracy. The main thing, however, is ot the form of government, but the energy with hich the government devotes itself

The law of God which constitutes revealed in the Scriptures. The

to Luther was mainly the textbook of doctrine, and the source of theology, contained for Calvin a revelation not only of the polity of the Church, but of the main principles of social well-being as well. A theocracy therefore meant a state founded and built up upon the teaching of Scripture, or in other words, the application of the truths of the Bible to civic and political life. Herein perhaps lies the greatest contribution which Calvin made to Social Reform. In claiming that the Bible was a textbook of sociology as well as religion, he took up a position which was destined to produce revolutionary results in the future, (4) How, then, is a theocracy to be established? It can only really be achieved when Church and State unite together for its accomplishment. Church and state, according to Calvin, are related to one another, as body to soul. As Dr. Fairbairn puts it, "Without the State there would be no medium for the Church to work in, no body for the soul to animate; without the Church there could be no law higher than expediency to govern the State, no ideal of thought and conduct, no soul to animate the body. Both Church and State, therefore, were necessary to the good ordering of society, and each was explained by the same idea." (5) The State so constituted and established possessed supreme power over the individual, and the individual had no rights against the state. This naturally followed from the obvious fact that there could be no appeal against the law of God. Under the inspiration of Calvin the city of Geneva drew up an elaborate code, which regulated life in all its aspects down to the most minute details. No variation was tolerated, and all infractions of the law were severely punished. The régime of Calvin insisted upon the principle that the individual is bound to sacrifice his

own particular whims and fancies, when these clash with the general interests, for the sake of the community as a whole. But if the individual lost in some respects, he gained in others. If he was bound to sacrifice his private liberty to the well-being of the State, on the other hand, it must be remembered that the State made itself responsible for his well-being too. Calvin laid it down, as one of the rules of government, that it was the duty of the State to provide useful employment for every man that could work; and what is more, he introduced new industries (e.g. cloth and weaving) into the city in order to enable it to perform its obligations.

Such are the leading ideas which underlie Calvin's attempt to create a perfect city. The success of an enterprise conducted upon such principles as these depends upon two conditions. The leaders of the movement must possess sufficient enlightenment and insight to enable them to interpret aright the will of God in the matter of social welfare, and their interpretation must be so clear and self-evident that it wins for itself universal approval. And then the Church and the State must be practically co-extensive as they were in Geneva, in order to make it possible for the Church to impose its laws upon the people. In other words, Calvin's scheme is only capable of practical realization in a society saturated with the Christian spirit and wholly devoted to the Christian ideal.

In the case of Geneva these two conditions were largely fulfilled, and consequently Calvin's work became one of the most splendid social experiments known to history. In an age when most of the great European nations were hurrying in the wake of Machiavelli to the worst form of despotism they had ever

known, the little city of Geneva stood out before the world as the home of freedom, and afforded a welcome asylum to hosts of refugees who had been exiled from other countries on account of their love of civil and religious liberty. And out of Geneva there issued a stream of influence which enabled most of these nations eventually to destroy the despotism they seemed at the time so bent upon establishing. As Mark Pattison says: "it was the Calvinistic discipline that reformed Scotland, emancipated Holland, attained a brief but brilliant reign in England, and maintained a struggle of sixty years against the royal authority in France."

A word must be said with regard to the social effects produced by Calvinism in Scotland and Holland.

We are not concerned with the dramatic episodes which make the career of John Knox one of the most thrilling narratives in modern history. We have only to deal with the social principles which he enunciated or exemplified in his conduct of affairs. The aim of Knox was to establish in Scotland a replica of the régime of Calvin at Geneva. It would have been a gigantic undertaking under any circumstances. Calvin's scheme had only been tried on a small stage. Whether it could be applied to a large country with a scattered population like Scotland, remained to be proved. Calvin's success had been largely due to the influence of his personality. The whole of Geneva was constantly under his eye. His touch can be seen in almost every action of the magistrates. Knox could not hope to dominate Scotland in the same way. He could not be everywhere at the same time. His influence would necessarily have to be exerted at a distance. But in addition to the difficulties created by geography, Knox had constantly to contend against the permanent opposition of the Queen and the Court,

who tried to thwart his work in every possible way. But if the different conditions, under which Knox had to work, prevented him from attaining Calvin's success, they helped at any rate to broaden and deepen the social and political influence of the movement. In the first place the ecclesiastical machinery had to be enlarged and elaborated to suit the conditions of Scotland. This in itself was a liberal education, for it taught the Scotch the principles of representative government; and the principles first learned in the government of the Church were afterwards applied to the government of the country. In the second place, the opposition of Queen Mary gave a more independent and democratic tone to the Church, and this new spirit gradually infused itself into the blood of the people. The answer which Knox gave to the Queen when she asked him whether subjects, having power, might resist their princes—"If their princes exceed their bounds, Madam, and do against that wherefore they should be obeyed, it is no doubt but they may be resisted even by power"—struck a new note in the history of the Reformation, and cancelled all the regulations of the confessions (Knox's own included), which insisted on the divine right of kings and the duty of passive obedience.

In his *Book of Discipline*, drawn up in 1560, Knox propounded a splendid programme of social reform. The scheme proposed that the Church, in addition to the maintenance of public worship, should in every parish provide (*a*) that all unable to earn a living should be supported out of the public funds; (*b*) that all able to work should be compelled to do so; (*c*) that every child should be afforded an opportunity of education; (*d*) that every youth of promise should have an open way to the universities through a system of

high schools. The scheme was not completely carried owing to lack of funds. The endowments upon which Knox had relied were in the confusion that followed the establishment of the Reformation sequestrated for the most part from the Church, either by the Crown or the nobles, and nothing was left for social experiments. Still, though the scheme was quite unattainable at the time, Knox bequeathed it to the nation as a great social ideal; and it is very largely to that ideal that Scotland owes the great educational advantages which it possesses to-day.

The limitations of space preclude anything more than the briefest reference to the magnificent struggle for liberty which the Reformation inspired in the Netherlands. The most noteworthy characteristic about the movement in the Netherlands is that throughout it was a people's battle. There was no strong inspiring religious personality like Luther or Calvin to stir the blood of the nation and rouse the people to enthusiasm. The only great name is that of William of Orange, and it was in the political sphere and on the battlefield that his strength was most manifest. The significant point for us is that the spirit of the Reformation enabled a subject race to maintain a stubborn resistance for twenty-five years against the flower of the Spanish army, and finally to win independence and liberty. Every weapon which the Inquisition possessed was tried in vain. Nothing could quench the indomitable courage of the Dutch. With intrepid faith they faced the most ghastly forms of torture and martyrdom that the diabolical ingenuity of their persecutors could devise. The Spanish General Alva confessed just before his recall that nothing but the complete extermination of the Protestants would restore the Netherlands to the Catholic faith. The

only hope of success was to raze to the ground every city that could not be garrisoned with Spanish soldiers. That, however, was impossible, for the Dutch had become masters of the sea ; and when at last in sheer desperation they cut the dykes and flooded their territories rather than submit, the Spaniards were forced to evacuate the country and a Dutch Republic was established. Thus the Netherlands, thanks to the Reformation, were the first country in Europe to win civil and religious liberty.

Our examination of the facts has shown us how the social influence of the Reformation increased as the new stream of religious truth gathered strength and volume. Luther commenced by being neutral on social questions, but was driven by circumstances to link the movement with the forces of reaction. Calvin, however, turned the Reformation into a new channel, and definitely made social reform part of the Christian programme. As Troeltsch says, " It is not till Calvin that we can speak of Christian social reform and social construction, in so far as we mean the conscious work of Christian society." From Switzerland Calvin's new ideal passed into Scotland and Holland, and finally found embodiment in English Puritanism.

II

The Indirect Effects of the Reformation

Now that we have examined the direct effects of the Reformation in certain typical countries, we are in a better position for estimating the more general and indirect results of the movement on social progress. The most potent influences exerted by an event in history very often do not reveal themselves to its con-

temporaries. The men who live near the times often fail to appreciate the full scope and significance of the truths which have been proclaimed, or the forces which have been set in motion. The harvest produced from the seed sown by Luther and Calvin must have far exceeded the expectations of the sowers themselves. The Reformation is the greatest event in modern times, not because of its achievements in the sixteenth century, but because the new truths which it inculcated have been working themselves out in history ever since, sometimes in a way little anticipated by the Reformers. "The value of the Reformation," to quote the words of Professor Gwatkin, "is not so much in what it did as in what it made possible."

(*a*) The Reformation *introduced a new ideal of life.* According to the teaching of the pre-Reformation Church, the highest life could only be attained in the monastery, by men and women who had cut themselves off from ordinary society, and abjured the common pleasures and duties of the family and civic life. The mediaeval idea of piety consists in flight from the present evil world. "The model saint of the Roman Church," to quote the words of Schaff, "is the monk separated from the enjoyments and duties of society, and anticipating the angelic life in heaven, where they neither marry nor are given in marriage." This monastic conception is based upon a dualistic view of the universe. The two worlds—the natural and spiritual—stand over against each other in radical antagonism. The soul of man is poised between them, and they are so related to him that, as Thomas Aquinas says, "The nearer he inclines to the one, the further he departs from the other." It was only by renouncing the pleasures of earth that men could attain the beatitude of heaven. The only safe rule of life was a

rigid asceticism which meant the repression of all the natural instincts and the cultivation of the anti-social spirit. Nothing in the history of the human race has ever been so fatal to social progress as the monastic ideal. When that ideal was at its highest point of success, it meant the withdrawal of the world's choicest and purest souls from all active interest in the common life. The management of secular affairs was left to those who had not sufficient character or enthusiasm to adopt the loftiest mode of life. If monasticism could have secured for itself universal adoption, it would have necessarily involved the suicide of the human race. And when monasticism fell from this high place and degenerated, as it often did, into corruption, it became more anti-social still, since it encouraged evil practices and vices which inevitably entail the disintegration of society.

It was, perhaps, the greatest achievement of Luther and the Reformers that they were able to lay the axe at the root of the monastic theory of life and destroy its very foundations. They attacked the fundamental dualism on which monasticism was based. They denied that the true life was only attainable in the seclusion of the cloister. They asserted that the man who cut himself off from social relationships lived a maimed and artificial life. The highest graces and virtues of the Christian life could only be acquired through social intercourse in the home and the state. Far from being prejudicial to the spiritual interests, marriage and business and politics afforded men a sacred opportunity of consecrating their talents to the noblest ends. No better expression of the sentiments of the Reformers could probably be found than the well-known and oft-quoted words in Browning's "Rabbi ben Ezra"—

"Let us not always say
Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, gained ground, made way upon the whole;
As the bird wings and sings
Let us say 'All good things
Are ours; nor soul helps flesh more now
Than flesh helps soul.'"

"*Ein Christenmensch,*" said Luther, "*ein fröhlicher Mensch sein muss.*" "You may enjoy every pleasure in the world which is not sinful in itself." "Nature has made gold and silver, and everything that is fair and beautiful, attractive." "The Lord God made the good Rhine wine for us to drink." In all probability the words which Heine ascribes to Luther,

"Who does not love wine, wife, and song
Remains a fool his whole life long,"

are not authentic, but they represent his views. The teaching of Luther completely revolutionized the conception of the Christian life. It was through Luther, as Goethe so finely put it, "that we have the courage to stand with firm feet upon God's earth, and have become conscious again of our divinely-endowed human nature."

(*b*) As a result of the introduction of the new ethical ideal, the Reformation gave a *new sanctity to home life and the family relationship.* The mediaeval Church, by insisting upon the necessity of celibacy for the attainment of the saintly character, had cast a slur upon marriage and all that marriage involved. At the best it was regarded as a necessary evil, to be permitted to those who were not endowed with the purest virtues and could not therefore aspire to the life of saintliness. Here again the mediaeval theory

displayed its anti-social tendency. Family life is the foundation upon which society is constructed, and must be so, unless we adopt the plan propounded by Plato in the *Republic*. To attack the family, as the mediaeval Church did, by its doctrine of celibacy, and to treat as secular and pagan the most tender and precious human relationship, is to deny the possibility of creating a Christian state altogether, since the ideal state cannot be built up on a rotten foundation. The Reformers, by consecrating and ennobling the home and the family (and modern Christian home life is altogether the creation of the Reformation) regenerated the social system at its springs and sources. As Dr. Marshall says in his book on *Economics*, "Individualism governed by the temper of the Reformed religion intensified family life, making it deeper and purer and holier than it had ever been before. . . . The family affections of those races which have adopted the Reformed religion are the richest and fullest of earthly feelings; there never has been before any material of texture at once so strong and fine with which to build up a noble fabric of social life." No nation can ever rise above the level of its family life. By raising the standard of the home life of the people, the Reformation made one of its most notable contributions to the social progress of the race.

(*c*) A further result of the abandonment of the monastic ideal is found in the sanctification of the *commercial and civic activities* of man. The mediaeval Church frowned upon trade and commerce, and attached small value to the duties and responsibilities of citizenship. Everything of this kind belonged to the secular life, and was a hindrance to the development of the soul. The Reformers removed the ban, and taught mankind that commerce and citizenship

alike afforded opportunities for the exercise of Christian virtue. As Sohm puts it, "Now for the first time is seen the full value of the State, of a civic calling and of civic freedom. . . . The State appears no longer as a work of the devil, a work of sin or injustice. The State like the family is a divine institution. . . . Look at the whole round of political life, at labour in agriculture and commerce, in handicraft and trade, in science and art, in obedience and command: the labour of manservant and maid, the judge, the soldier, the official and the prince; look where you will, all this labour, performed as a calling ordered by God, is the service of God which is well pleasing to Him. The whole world has become holy, and all that was profane in it is done away. The world with all its duties is changed into the vineyard of the Lord, into a temple of God in which we are to worship Him in spirit and in truth."

(*d*) From this conception of the sacredness of life on all its sides and in all its relationships, there followed as a natural consequence the conviction that there was a *social ideal ordained by God to be worked out in human society.* The Kingdom of Heaven, in other words, was not merely a great ecclesiastical system, or some catastrophic event which was to come to pass at the end of time; it was a spiritual force which is present here and now, working in the world, leavening society, purifying commerce, ennobling art, ameliorating the conditions of life, striving towards the creation of an ideal society where the will of God would be perfectly carried out. Monasticism abandoned the world as hopeless, and left it to its doom; the Reformers—Calvin in particular—set themselves to transform the world according to the pattern which they had seen on the Mount of Vision.

(*e*) The Reformation also enhanced *the value and meaning of personality*. Mediaevalism regarded the individual man as part of a great machine. The State, the Empire, and the Church were everything. The units did not count. The individual did not matter. Tennyson's description of Nature is also a description of the mediaeval spirit.

> "So careful of the type she seems,
> So careless of the single life."

The new religious teaching of Luther and Calvin in different ways impressed upon the world the importance of the individual. (1) Both Reformers laid down, as one of the primary axioms of faith, the principle that all men stand on the same footing in the sight of God. A sacerdotal system always encourages class distinctions. The priest alone can enter into the Holy of Holies. The common man must stand in the outer courts of the Temple and has no right of access to the presence of God. The Reformers demolished the sacerdotal position, and taught the poorest peasant that he was as dear to God as priest or prince. There was only one way that led to life, and along that road all alike must travel if they would enter into the Kingdom. (2) In addition to this common axiom, the doctrine of predestination, as it was enunciated by Calvin, introduced a new element which emphasized personality in a still more striking way. As Troeltsch says in a recent article in the *Hibbert Journal*, "The idea of personality in Calvinism stands out in quite a different manner than does that idea in Lutheranism. No humble devotion of self to God and charitable devotion of self to one's neighbour, but the strongest personal value, the high sense of having a divine mission in the world, a grace-given preference over thous-

ands and an immeasurable responsibility, are what engross the soul of man who, in the complete solitude of his inner self, experiences and succeeds in working out the grace which is his title to election. . . . Calvinism possesses a valuation of the personality of the elect which reminds us throughout of Kant, while Luther remained much more within the circle of the mystics."

The influence of this new discovery of the value of personality upon social progress can scarcely be exaggerated. Man stood once more with head erect upon the earth. He realized again the dignity of his manhood and the worth of his soul, the inherent rights which he possessed, and the grave responsibilities which rested upon him. It was this new conception of personality that supplied the motive power for the regeneration of the world.

We must guard ourselves, however, against one very common mistake. The Reformation was, in Westcott's phrase, " the affirmation of individuality." But individuality must not be confounded with Individualism in its modern connotation. The theory implied in the term Individualism was almost entirely unknown at the time of the Reformation.

(*f*) The Reformation also undoubtedly helped *to foster the sense of intellectual liberty*. Guizot has said " that the Reformation was a vast effort made by the human race to secure its freedom : it was a newborn desire to think and judge freely and independently of ideas and opinions, which till then Europe received or considered itself bound to receive from the hands of antiquity. It was a great endeavour to emancipate the human reason and to call things by their right names. It was an insurrection of the human mind against the absolute power of the spiritual order."

If this statement of Guizot had been intended to refer to the actual results produced in the lifetime of the Reformers, it would not be wholly true. The Reformers, of course, broke away from the authority of tradition, but they always substituted a new form of authority in its place, and they claimed for their new authority the most absolute obedience and allegiance. Toleration beyond a certain point was an idea quite foreign to their creed. The Anabaptists were most cruelly persecuted, and Servetus was put to death, because they differed from the traditional authority in a different way from Luther and Calvin, and refused to accept the new standard which had been set up in its place. There is a sense in which it is true to say that at first there was no more freedom of thought in Protestantism than in Roman Catholicism. Neither system willingly permitted any considerable variation from the accepted faith. Luther was as anxious as the Pope "to wring the neck of reason and strangle the beast." But when we pass from the immediate to the ultimate effects of the Reformation, the truth of Guizot's words becomes unquestionable. Freedom of thought may not be the child of the Reformers, but it is one of their lineal descendants. The action of the Reformers was a revolt against the constituted ecclesiastical authority, which had exercised an unchallenged sway over the minds of men for more than a thousand years. The success of their revolt made other revolts possible, and even encouraged them. Hosts of men who followed Luther in his attack on Rome ceased to be his disciples when it came to constructive work. They helped him to pull down the old house, but they did not care to live with him in the new house which he built to take its place: they preferred to build one of their ow

formation, therefore, inevitably and much to the regret of the first Reformers, produced variety and diversity of thought, which in the long run naturally resulted in the introduction of toleration.

(*g*) The Reformation also kindled afresh the fire of *political and social liberty*. Here again the effects of the movement were at first disappointing. There can be no doubt that in weakening the power of the Pope it strengthened for the moment the hands of the monarchs of Europe, and increased their despotism. Henry VIII, for instance, became a much worse tyrant after he had supplanted the Pope as head of the English Church. Luther gave to the doctrine of passive obedience an unction which it had not possessed for ages. But we should be taking very short views of history if we refused to recognize that after the first few years of its existence, the course of the movement turned into quite a different channel and completely reversed its first effects. If in its childhood the Reformation raised Henry VIII to a higher pinnacle of power than any English king had possessed for generations, in its full manhood it sent King Charles to the scaffold for infringing the liberties of his subjects. The lever by which it finally lifted Europe out of despotism was its doctrine of the "priesthood of all believers." "All Christians," said Luther, "are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them save of office alone." If this principle is logically and consistently carried out, it abolishes all distinctions within the pale of the Church. Laymen and clergy stand on a similar footing, and have equal rights. Every Christian has the privilege and duty of sharing in the government and administration of the Church. The sons of the Reformation learned the meaning of citizenship first of all in the Church,

and having learned the value of freedom there, could be content with nothing less in civic and national affairs. The Church was the school in which the modern world was taught the privilege of liberty and the art of government. "Religious liberty," as Schaff puts it, "is the mother of civil liberty. The universal priesthood of Christians leads legitimately to the universal kingship of free, self-governing citizens, whether under a monarchy or under a republic."

(*h*) From what has been said, it is easy to perceive how *the Reformation fostered the spirit of democracy.* As M. Borgeaud says in words which have already been quoted, "Modern democracy is the child of the Reformation, not of the Reformers." The full significance of the doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers was not realized at once. Luther, as Troeltsch remarks, "shrank from putting this principle into effect." Even in the Church constitution of Calvinism, it was not allowed full play. The English Independents were the first to grasp the real meaning and logical consequences of the new idea, and to translate it into a Church polity. They were the first to see that if the doctrine of the universal priesthood was to be fully carried out, all authority in Church matters must be vested in the whole body of Church members.

Robert Browne, the founder of Independency, as Dexter says, "had no idea of being a democrat or that he was teaching democracy. His conception of Church government, it is clear, was of the absolute monarchy of Christ over His Church. But then he conceived of Christ the king as reigning through as many regents as there are individual subjects of His kingdom." And when he reached this point he had, though probably perfectly unconsciously, laid the foundations of a spiritual democracy. From the

Church the democratic idea passed slowly and almost imperceptibly into the state. Even Robert Browne himself seems to have felt that the rules which he formulated for the government of the Church ought *mutatis mutandis* to be applied to civil affairs. In his treatise *A Booke concerning True Christians,* after describing the regulations of Church government, he adds the significant words, " We give these definitions so generall that they may be applied also to the civill state." Sixty-six years after this book of Browne's was published, in the year 1648, the English Independents presented to Parliament a manifesto entitled "*An Agreement of the People of England,*" which demanded the establishment of a complete democracy. Among the principles which are laid down in this remarkable document are the following : The recognition of the sovereignty of the people ; the supreme power to be vested in a single legislative assembly ; biennial parliaments ; the equitable and proportionate distribution of seats ; the extension of the franchise to all citizens of full age except hired servants and those in receipt of relief ; the toleration of all forms of Christianity ; the Churches to be freed from state interference and control ; the limitation of the powers of Parliament by fundamental laws embodied in the constitution, especially with regard to the civil liberties guaranteed to citizens. Such was the political ideal of the Independents at the commencement of the Commonwealth. It is the logical consequence of Luther's doctrine of Universal Priesthood transferred to the sphere of civic life.

And it was not only in England that the Puritans laid the foundations of modern democracy. The Pilgrim Fathers carried the same great ideal across the Atlantic to America. At the end of their memorable

voyage, before they disembarked from the *Mayflower*, they drew up an Agreement or Covenant, which constitutes the charter of religious and civil liberty in America. Well has it been said that " In the cabin of the *Mayflower* humanity recovered its rights and instituted government on the basis of ' equal laws ' for ' the general good.' "

Thus did the Christian Church nobly avenge the wrong which had been done to it by the State in the early ages. In ancient times the Roman Empire gave to the Church an organization and a constitution which crippled its freedom and destroyed its spirituality. In modern times the Church, rejuvenated and purified by the Reformation, gave to the nations of Europe principles of government which enabled them to regain their liberty and organize democracy.

(*i*) The Reformation revolutionized *the conception of Christian charity*. Charity in mediaeval times was cultivated not so much for the welfare of the recipient as for the benefit of the donor. When a man gave money to a beggar, it was not so much with a view of helping him in his necessity as of performing a meritorious act which would secure his own salvation. As Innocent III put it, " Alms purify, alms deliver, alms redeem, alms protect, alms make perfect, alms save." The result was that charity became indiscriminate, and tended to encourage rather than to diminish poverty. A host of professional mendicants haunted every city and fattened on the rich man's dread of purgatory. Of course, theoretically, according to the teaching of the Church, the giver of alms was required to investigate the deserts of the recipient, and one of the most distinguished Paris theologians went so far as to lay it down " that to give to one who has no need is not only not a merit, but even a demerit." But in spite of

this, there is no vestige of doubt that the mediaeval doctrine of almsgiving demoralized a large section of the community. The monasteries by their bountiful largesses seem to have aggravated the evil. "The monks," so we are told in a eulogy of the system written by an anonymous writer in the year 1591, "made hospitals and lodgings within their own houses, wherein they kept a number of impotent persons with all necessaries for them, besides the great alms which they gave daily at their gates to every one that came for it. Yea, no wayfaring person could depart without a night's lodging, meat, drink and money, it not being demanded from whence he or she came and whither he would go." The policy of the Reformers may be illustrated by two quotations from Luther: (1) Luther insists that mendicancy must be put down. "Begging is to be rigidly prohibited: all who are not old or weak shall work. No beggars shall be permitted to stay who do not belong to the parish." (2) The needs of the deserving poor ought to be met out of the common chest of the people. "Each town should provide for its own poor people. . . . Poor householders who have honourably laboured at their craft or in agriculture ought to be given loans from the public chest; and this aid shall be given to them without return if they are unable to restore it." The first great English Poor Law, which was passed in 1536, practically embodie these two principles of Luther. The giving of dol was prohibited. "No person shall make any commo dole or shall give any ready money in alms to beggars." Local authorities are required to "succour, find an keep" all the impotent poor belonging to their district The necessary means were to be obtained by the collection of alms in church and at public festivals. It was soon discovered that the Church collections did

not suffice for the purpose. Various Acts were therefore passed authorizing the local officials to bring pressure to bear upon those who were reluctant to give, and finally in 1572, since the voluntary method does not appear to have worked well, the justices were empowered to make a direct assessment, and overseers of the poor were appointed to take charge of the whole business. The Reformation thus introduced three important changes into the mediaeval system of Poor Relief: (1) It insisted upon the classification of paupers; (2) it transferred the responsibility from the Church to the State; (3) it laid down the principle that the community, as a community, was in duty bound to relieve the necessities of the deserving poor.

(*j*) The Reformation gave *a great stimulus to education.* Calvin has been called "the father of popular education and the inventor of free schools"; but this is an honour which he must share with Luther and Zwingli, and indeed with all the Reformers. In 1524 Luther wrote an address to the mayors and aldermen of German cities on the condition of education, in which he attacked the inefficiency of the existing system, asserting that the German schools were "a hell and a purgatory in which with much flogging children learned nothing," and urged the necessity of reform. "So much money is spent year after year for arms, roads, dams, and innumerable similar objects, why should not as much be spent for the education of poor youth?" He even went so far as to advocate compulsory education. "I maintain that the civil authorities are under obligation to compel people to send their children to school." We have already seen how John Knox advocated a complete system of education for Scotland which aimed at securing (*a*) that every child should be provided with the opportunity of attending school;

(*b*) that every youth of promise should be afforded the chance by a graduated system of higher schools of going up to the university. In England, too, great advances were made. Cranmer drew up a scheme for founding schools in every diocese from the funds of the monasteries. Unfortunately the spoils of the monasteries were appropriated by other hands, and it was left to private charity to provide the funds. Henry VIII founded ten grammar schools, Edward VI twenty-seven, Mary and Elizabeth thirty between them. In addition to these benefactions, much was done by private charity. "In all, two hundred and fifty higher or grammar schools were founded under the immediate impulse of the Reformation." In the reign of Henry VIII, too, the apprenticeship system was established in England. The apprentice laws enacted that all children between the age of five and thirteen who were found begging or idle were to be bound as apprentices to some handicraft. These laws were binding upon master and servant alike. No master could refuse to receive an apprentice, and no youth could refuse to accept the position found for him.

(*k*) The Reformation *played an important part in the development of the middle classes*, which is one of the most noteworthy features of this period of history. In the Middle Ages there was no intermediate rank of any importance between the nobles and the tillers of the soil, though the latter were divided into several grades. The general social theory that prevailed (and it was supported by the teaching of the Church) held that a man was born into his predestined rank and ought not to aspire to a higher status. The growth of commerce completely overthrew this view of life by placing a new lever in the hands of the trading

classes, which enabled them by the acquisition of wealth to raise themselves into a position which challenged the social supremacy of the feudal lords. The Reformation, by its emphasis on the value of personality and by its insistence that it was the duty of every man to make the fullest use of his capacities, fostered the new spirit ; and by the system of education which it advocated and to a certain extent succeeded in establishing, it gave men the power of breaking their "birth's invidious bar," and rising to the position which their ability fitted them to fill. There can be little doubt that it was the middle classes who reaped the immediate benefit from the Reformation. From their ranks the most stalwart supporters of the movement were drawn. This fact naturally reacted upon the constitution of the Churches themselves. Bishop Creighton has admitted in the case of the Church of England that "the changes made at the time of the Reformation were too exclusively made in the interest of the prosperous middle class," and his words are more or less true of most of the Reformed Churches.

(*l*) A brief reference must be made to some of the *socialistic theories* to which the age of the Reformation gave birth. These, of course, did not emanate from the ranks of the orthodox Reformers, but arose either in connexion with some of the sporadic radical sects, or amongst the *litterati* of the schools. Little is known of the schemes of Jan Mathys and Jan of Leyden, except that they rested on a communistic basis. The social teaching of Münzer and the Anabaptists has come down to us in a vague and indefinite shape, but we know that it advocated a very extreme method of reform. The proposals put forward by Eberlin in 1521 have, however, been transmitted in clearer form. To quote the description of the scheme given by Pro-

fessor Pollard in the *Cambridge Modern History*, "Its pervading principle was that of popular election: each village was to choose a gentleman as its magistrate: two hundred chief places were to elect a knight for their bailiff: each ten bailiwicks were to be organized under a city and each ten cities under a duke or a prince. One of the princes was to be elected king, and he, like every subordinate officer, was to be guided by an elected council. In this scheme town was throughout subordinated to country. . . . Agriculture was pronounced the noblest means of existence. Capitalist organizations were abolished. . . . Only articles of real utility were to be manufactured, and every form of luxury was to be suppressed."

The noblest social dream of the period is to be found in Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*. More touches on most of the great social problems which were beginning to demand the attention of the world, e.g. the punishment of crime, labour, education, the freedom of conscience. His attack upon the existing system is most stringent. He regards it as nothing more or less than "a conspiracy of the rich against the poor." "The rich devise every means by which they may in the first place secure to themselves what they have amassed by wrong, and then take to their own use and profit at the lowest possible price the work and labour of the poor"; and as a consequence the peasant is doomed to "a life so wretched that even a beast's life seems preferable." In contrast to the prevailing system, Utopia was organized in the interest of the poor. The object of its labour legislation was the welfare of the labourer. Goods were possessed in common, and labour was compulsory upon all. The hours of work were made light, that opportunity might be provided for the culture of the mind. The

aim of the criminal code was "nothing else but the destruction of vice and the saving of men." Freedom of conscience was allowed to all, since the people of Utopia were "persuaded that it is not in a man's power to believe what he list."

Leaving out of account its fantastic details, there can be no doubt that Utopia gave to the modern world a new social vision which has been the inspiration of social reformers in every generation.

(*m*) It is impossible to close this essay without making some allusion to the *losses* which were entailed in the Reformation period. Great as were the gains to social progress, there are at any rate two losses to be put to the other side of the account. Neither of these is due to the Reformers, though each was more or less affected by their teaching. In the first place, the world lost the dream, which had filled the imagination of the Middle Ages, of a united humanity, living under one Church and one form of government. In place of the dream of unity, we find the principle of nationalism. The watchword of the Reformation age was decentralization. The centrifugal forces were encouraged at the expense of the centripetal. As a result there grew up the spirit of national rivalry which has been responsible for most of the devastating wars in modern times, and which to-day seems to be more potent than ever. Secondly, the Reformation period is responsible for the discovery of commercial methods and financial operations, which have led to the despotism of capital. Luther, as we have seen, protested against these methods with his usual vehemence, but he was "a voice crying in the wilderness," to which the world paid no heed. And where Luther bound, Calvin loosed, though it is only fair to add that Calvin restricted the liberty of receiving interest to

genuine transactions where lender and borrower both gained some advantage. The fact however remains that the introduction of commerce and the increased importance that thereby became attached to capital, complicated the social problem and introduced new difficulties in the realization of the social ideal.

IX

The Evangelical Revival and Philanthropy

By Rev. THOMAS CUMING HALL, D.D., Professor of Christian Ethics in Union Theological Seminary, New York.

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ARGUMENT

Introduction—Organized Religion as a Social Force—The Evangelical Revival as a Dramatic Climax—The Movement not a Theological One—Interest and Importance of this Non-Theological Character.

I. The Causes of the Spiritual Deadness: Exhaustion of the Nation by Religious Differences, the Attitude of the Political Leaders, e.g. Horace Walpole.

II. The Character of the New Impulse to the Spiritual Forces of England: Intense Activity—Individualism corrected by the Doctrine of Free Grace, its Motive of Charity, its Contribution to Intelligent Philanthropy.

III. The Philanthropy of the Evangelical Leaders—Education—Popular Preaching—Discontent of the Working Classes—A Democratic Basis—The Pronounced Attitude towards Slavery—The Condemnation of Slavery as Immoral—Slavery at Home.

IV. The Influence of the Evangelicals within the Establishment on Legislation—The Records of Remedial Legislation from 1800 onward—The Obstacles to Reform.

V. The Internationalism of Foreign Missions—Missionary Societies—The Influence of the Moravian Missions—The Real Interest of the Movement Evangelical and not Theologically Dogmatic.

VI. The Criticism of the Later Phases of Evangelical Philanthropy—Charles Dickens—Its Weakness not Shallow Hypocrisy, but its Unscientific, Sentimental Character.

VII. The Aftermath of the Evangelical Revival in Radicalism—Robert Owen—James and John Stuart Mill—The Contribution of the Evangelical Movement to Peaceful Political Organization and Agitation.

VIII. The Evangelical Inspirations in the Broad Church Party—Maurice, Kingsley and Carlyle as Children of the Evangelical Revival—"Christian Socialists"—The New Philanthropy, Educational, Socially Reforming.

IX. The Evangelical Movement as a Second Reformation—The Defects of the Early Reformation on the Social and Philanthropic Side—The Social Demand and the Social Awakening—The Catholic Reaction also Social and Philanthropic.

X. The Gift of the Evangelical Revival to the English-speaking World—The New Kingdom-Purpose—Education—Prison-Reform—Training for Philanthropy—The Resemblance of the Salvation Army to the Evangelical Movement—Christian Life as a Life of Redemptive Service.

X

Christianity and the French Revolution

By J. HOLLAND ROSE, Litt.D.,
Author of "The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Era."

ARGUMENT.

Introduction—Two Tendencies in Human History, The Claim for Liberty and the Demand for Order and Justice—These Tendencies in Religion—Connexion of Christian Belief and Movements on Behalf of Liberty.

I. The Character of the French Revolution—An Emancipating Movement not Essentially Irreligious—Voltaire not Atheist, but Opposed to Roman Church—Rousseau's Misconception of Christianity in the *Social Contract*, and More Favourable Attitude in the *Savoyard Vicar*—The Sentiment for Social Reform.

II. The Collapse of Organized Christianity in France—The Power and Wealth of the Roman Catholic Church, the Curse of Favouritism, Poverty of the Curés, their Influence as Ardent Reformers—The Church Morally and Intellectually Bankrupt—The Strength of the Reform Movement in the Church—The Attitude of the Populace not Anti-Christian—The Legislation of the National Assembly—The Right of Religious Liberty—The Outbreak of Passion and Mob-Violence—The Confiscation of the Lands of the Church—The Renunciation of the Obligation to Support the Clergy—The Dissolution of the Monastic Orders—The *Civil Constitution of the Clergy*—The Invasion of the Domain of Faith Fatal—Aggravation of the Crisis by the Papacy and its Supporters—Fanaticism Kindled by Fanaticism—Anti-Religious Fury.

III. The Reaction and the Restoration of the Roman Catholic Church—The Failure of Protestantism to win the Adhesion of Frenchmen—The 'Constitutional' Church—The Concordat of Napoleon with the Pope—The Subsequent Recovery of her old Position by the Church—The Power of the Church used in Repressing Democracy and Promoting Autocracy—The Separation of Church and State.

IV. The Contrast between France and England in the Relation of Religion to Democracy—The secure Place of the National Church in the Hearts of Englishmen, the Influence of the Wesleyan Revival, the Close Connection between Evangelical Religion and Philanthropy—The New Impulse towards Democracy manifested in Ways on the whole Friendly to Religion—Cartwright's Plea for Popular Government on a religious basis, the People's Charter of 1838—Tom Paine's Influence Short-lived—The Failure of Physical Force Chartism—The Service of Maurice and Kingsley—No Divorce in our Island between Religion and Reforming Movements—Affinity of the Principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity with the Christian Social Ideal—The Christian Church and Democracy Allies, not Foes.

X

Christianity and the French Revolution

In the history of the human race there are observable two outstanding tendencies, that which makes for the freedom of the unit or individual, and that which produces orderly cohesion of the mass. These tendencies are in constant action. Except in the most lethargic races, the individual always has some free play for his energies; and in the times of wildest licence the principle of order speedily begins to reassert itself, if only in the form of the blackmail of a powerful baron or the despotism of a triumphant faction. The fundamental problem of political life is the harmonizing of the claim of the individual for liberty with the imperious demand of the community for order and justice.

What is true of social life may also be affirmed of the life of the race on its religious side. So soon as religion begins the difficult task of organization, it meets the same insoluble problem. If religion were limited to the communion of the individual with his Maker, the difficulty would not exist; but the devout soul cannot, and must not, remain alone on the mountain top; he must come down to the plain and seek to influence mankind for good. Then it is that the temptation besets him to seek to control men from without, instead of awakening a new life within them

and to build up the Kingdom of God with earthly materials. Despite the solemn warnings of Christ, a new Tower of Babel is begun, in the fond hope that men may scale the heavens with labour of hands and feet. A time comes when the toilers realize the futility of their enterprise, and demolish the lordly fabric; but before long there arises a generation reckless of the lessons of the past which strives again to build the spiritual kingdom with clay. The processes of construction and demolition have often been repeated; and it is scarcely too much to say that the history of Christianity on its political side has been that of the construction of elaborate systems and their removal or overthrow when they have proved to be a hindrance both to the spiritual life and to the welfare of mankind.

We have no space in which to point out the close connexion which has existed between vital Christian belief and movements on behalf of liberty. It is true there have been long periods when the Church has relied on, or has wielded, the secular power; and the results of such union have sooner or later always been disastrous. From the time when the Emperor Constantine allied the Church to the Roman State down to the time when Napoleon estimated the value of the papal alliance as equal to 200,000 soldiers, both political and spiritual liberty have suffered untold harm from so unnatural a coalition. At these retrograde periods the organization of the Church comes to be everything, and the spirit of the Gospels is apt to be stifled beneath armour. But any one who ponders on their message to man's inner life must see that such a state of things is essentially unchristian. Christianity, indeed, is no more to be blamed for their misdeeds than is the English Constitution for the cruelties of Henry VIII or the per-

sonal rule of Charles I. On the other hand, whenever the truth has been set forth by fearless souls like Wycliffe, Huss, and Luther, it has helped to further political as well as spiritual freedom. Not until the merely State Reformation of Henry VIII's days had deepened into the doctrinal and moral Reformation of the following reigns did England realize the meaning of the verse, "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The Puritans set up an ideal of national life far higher, purer and juster than had been seen since the evil days when the Christian Church linked itself to the decaying body of the Roman Empire. The saints blundered, it is true, and rendered their sway irksome beyond measure to the average man. That was to be expected. Nevertheless they had sown seed which bore a bounteous harvest in New England, and which served, even in Old England, to thwart the Romanizing efforts of James II. Who shall say how far the Revolution of 1688 and the Declaration of American Independence in 1776 were due to the dauntless spirit of the older Puritans?

It is, however with later developments than these that we are here mainly concerned. Though we shall close with a brief consideration of English political life, we may now turn our attention to the land where problems of the State have been worked out with unequalled intensity. France has well been called the political laboratory of Europe. The ardour of the national temperament has invested her annals with peculiar interest. Above all, it was the period of the great French Revolution which determined the relations of Christianity to the secular power in a great part of the Continent.

The French Revolution of the years 1789–1799 is not to be looked on as a series of violent outbreaks,

but rather as an emancipating movement which was marred by acts of exceptional folly and needless cruelty. It had its origin in a natural impulse of man to shake off serious evils and outworn usages, but it resulted also from new ideas which clashed with the existing order of things in Church and State. We are concerned here solely with those ideas which caused a revolt against the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, and with the influences at work which fatally weakened the defence.

It has often been stated that the Revolution was due mainly to the infidel writings of Voltaire, Rousseau, and the "Encyclopædists." It should be remembered, however, that Voltaire and Rousseau were far from being atheists, and that they made no organized attack on Christian doctrine. They were deists, and they declaimed bitterly against atheism as monstrous and incredible. Voltaire's philosophy was derived almost entirely from Locke and Bolingbroke. There is little of serious argument against the fundamentals of Christianity in Voltaire's works; but there is plenty of invective and satire at the expense of the superstitions then prevalent. He contributed nothing that was original to the thought of his time; but mankind owes much to a man who clearly summarized the criticism of his age and directed it vigorously against an effete and arrogant organism. Protestants must be grateful to the man who manfully protested against the infamous wrongs wreaked by the Roman Church on the pastor Calas on the strength of an incredible and unproven charge. When religion becomes an ally of despotism it earns the scorn of the humane; and the widespread revolt against its dogmas in eighteenth century France was due to a perception of the falsity of its position and the hypocrisy of many of its pro-

fessors. Voltaire summed up his aims in the motto, " Ecrasez l'Infâme " ; the phrase applied, not to Christianity, but to the Roman Church. Finally, it is noteworthy that the arguments which he drew from English sources were quite harmless in the land of their birth—a proof that religion which is vital and consistent need not fear the assaults of critics like the sage of Ferney.

The same remark is in some respects applicable to the writings of Rousseau. His political speculations would have had little vogue in a land where civic freedom was a reality. In the France of Louis XV, where monarchy was at once absolute and contemptible, and the structure of society lopsided and rotten, it was dangerous as well as fallacious to portray the construction of a perfect polity as an infallibly easy task. Without dwelling on the political sophisms that are attractively strewn in the reader's path in the *Social Contract* (1762), we may notice the author's attitude towards Christianity.

He claims, firstly, that as Jesus came to establish a kingdom which is not of this world, His followers must necessarily own a divided allegiance and thereby break the unity of the State. " Whatever destroys social unity (Rousseau declares) is good for nothing." Admitting the sublime excellence of the precepts of Christ, he yet insists that they will not make His followers good citizens because their interests will not be in this world. Again, he says : " Christianity preaches only servitude and dependence. Its spirit is too favourable to tyranny for the latter not to profit by it always. True Christians are made to be slaves." He then denies that Christians can be brave, good soldiers.[1]

It is clear that Rousseau took only the narrowest

[1] *Social Contract*, Bk. iv, chap. 8.

view of Christianity and of its history. Ignoring the many precepts which prescribe to Christians their duties in this life, and enjoin on them the formation of a loving brotherhood wherein love of God would inspire them with a passion for the service of man, the Genevese thinker pictures the Christian as a weak, colourless creature whose gaze is ever on the skies, who neglects the present and grovels to every tyrant and can therefore never help in the formation of a free community. In a word, he brands Christians with the defect of "other-worldliness," and uses terms of opprobrium towards them which the gifted lady novelist who coined that term would warmly have reprobated. In truth, this last chapter of the *Social Contract* teems with mistakes and inconsistencies. In one sentence he admits the wide difference between the Christianity of the Gospels and Roman Catholicism; but elsewhere his charges seem to apply solely to that communion; as when he accuses those absent-minded recluses of capturing the organization of the Roman Empire and setting up "the most violent despotism in the world." Apparently he felt no sense of incongruity in bringing this charge of unworldliness against the system which at any rate counted the greatest number of adherents of Christianity, and whose defects sprang mainly from the effort to dominate and absorb the civil power. His few casual references to Protestants also betray astonishing ignorance. He seems not to have heard of the Dutch "Beggars," of Cromwell's Ironsides, still less of the founding of New England by the Pilgrim Fathers on the basis of that Christian compact signed in the cabin of the *Mayflower* which provided a solid basis for a stable and beneficent polity. He names Cromwell only to class him with Catiline as an ambitious hypocrite!

It would scarcely be necessary to refer to this singular tissue of falsehoods and blunders, did it not figure in a work which the French revolutionists accepted as the new evangel. Deluded by the fallacious ease of his descriptions, and inspired by the ardour for liberty which undoubtedly fired him, their most determined leaders made it their chief aim after the overthrow of the French monarchy to rear the new society on the lines of the *Social Contract*. This was the source of the anti-religious zeal of the years 1793–1794. Rousseau's sketch of a social religion, which every one must profess, explains Robespierre's effort during his brief dictatorship to enforce the worship of the Supreme Being, if need be by the guillotine.

Rousseau's attitude towards Christianity in his "Savoyard Vicar" is far more favourable. He portrays that gentle idealist as adoring the Gospels and reverencing Christ as more than human. "If the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God." And again—"I believe all religions to be good so long as men serve God fittingly in them." Before the Vicar became a reverent theist, he had celebrated mass with levity; now his new creed of love to God and love to man caused him to celebrate it with reverence as became an unfathomable mystery. Such were the teachings of this charming story which powerfully affected multitudes of priests and laymen, and led them to strive in 1789 for the christianizing of the Church. It is here that Rousseau's influence was most beneficent. The fervour of "The Savoyard Vicar" was an effective answer to the cold dogmatism of the philosophic atheists, and it infused zeal and energy into the *curés*, who thenceforth strove, not only for the righting of

their own grievous wrongs, but also for the uplifting of the poor and oppressed around them. Sentiment played a perilously large part in the course of the French Revolution ; but its best expression was in the widely felt desire to redress the glaring inequalities of French social life. It was this desire (largely, but by no means solely, prompted by Christian motives) which welled forth in the *Ça Ira* song of 1790—a song not to be confused with the ferocious *Ça Ira* of the Terror :—

Le peuple en ce jour sans cesse répète
Ah ! Ça ira ! Ça ira ! Ça ira !
Suivant les maximes de l'Évangile
(Ah ! Ça ira ! Ça ira ! Ça ira)
Du législateur tout s'accomplira,
Celui qui s'élève on l'abaissera,
" Et qui s'abaisse, on l'élèvera."

We have looked ahead in order to catch a glimpse of some of the results of Rousseau's teachings so far as they concern us here. But we must now retrace our steps in order to notice the causes of the helpless collapse of organized Christianity in France. It resulted not merely from the ardour of the attacks of Voltaire, Rousseau, and the " Encyclopædists," but also from the utter weakness of the defenders.

The triumph of Roman Catholicism in France seemed to be complete in the year 1685, when Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes and sought to compel the conversion of all Protestants within his kingdom. It is estimated that about a quarter of a million of the best citizens of France then fled from her borders. Besides " dragonnading " the remainder, Louis admitted the control of the Pope over the discipline and clergy of the Church of France to an extent never known before. The spirit of inquiry was checked by

the Papal Bull, "Unigenitus" (1713), which secured the triumph of the Jesuits over the Jansenists, the more philosophic party in the Church; and thereafter the clergy sank into a state of mental torpor. The wealth of the Church increased, until, at the beginning of the Revolution, it amounted, according to an official estimate, to four milliards of francs (£160,000,000). Its lands, comprising about one-fifth of all France, produced a yearly income of about £4,000,000. The annual value of its tithes has been computed by M. Débidour at 80,000,000 or 90,000,000 francs (£3,200,000 or £3,600,000).[1] By ancient custom these revenues were almost entirely exempt from taxation by the State.

This vast wealth would not have been the object of envy, had its proceeds been fairly distributed; but the curse of favouritism had eaten deep into the life of the Church. The richest gifts were apportioned to the scions of nobles; and some were kept, whenever possible, in the hands of one family—the case of the de Rohans at Strasburg being notorious. That see had long descended from the bishop to his nephew; and there thus grew up an establishment which would have moved the wonder of the early Christians. The Bishop of Strasburg resided in his episcopal palace at Saverne with the pomp of a sovereign prince. He could entertain two hundred guests as well as their servants. The meals were long and luxurious, dishes of solid silver adding splendour to the repast.[2] The Archbishop of Narbonne had an income of £40,000 a year. The recently published Memoirs of the Comtesse de Boigne show the manner of his life. A fortnight spent at Narbonne in alternate years sufficed

[1] *Debidour, L'Église et l'État en France* (1789–1870), p. 21.
[2] Taine, *Ancien Régime*, i, pp. 187–8.

for the discharge of his archiepiscopal duties; and for six weeks every year he presided over the provincial Estates at Montpellier. He passed the rest of his time at his country estate amidst society remarkable, even in the reign of Louis XV, for its high living and loose thinking. The mother of the countess was once warned by a *grand vicaire* not to show her conjugal affection; "it is the one kind of love which is not tolerated here." At the hunt, the Archbishop was noted for the vigour of his language. When the exemplary Bishop of Montpellier was expected to be present, his host would say to the company, "By the way, gentlemen, no swearing to-day"; but he was the first to fling all restraint to the winds.

Scandals like these were exceptional; but they were noised abroad through France, and gave point to the complaints as to the wealth and insolence of the higher clergy. It was well known that the 116 bishops of the Church of France received stipends which averaged from £7,000 to £10,000 a year apiece; and in many cases this sum was largely increased by pluralities and sinecures. Meanwhile, at the other end of the scale, many of the parish priests were in a miserable condition. Goldsmith's vicar,

> "passing rich on forty pounds a year,"

would have been envied by very many French parish priests (*curés*), many of whom received barely half and some few only a quarter of that sum—generally in the shape of tithes which they had to extract from peasants as poor as themselves. Injustice often sharpened the edge of poverty. These miserable stipends were sometimes paid by vicars and *abbés commendataires*, who never visited the parishes which they farmed out at this beggarly rate to the real

workers. The evils of absenteeism, which had eaten the heart out of Feudalism, bade fair to strangle religion in many parts of France.

What wonder, then, that the parish priests became ardent reformers. Themselves the victims of injustice in the Church, they were in close contact with those who were borne to the ground by the burden of unjust taxes, the exactions of absentee landlords, and all the apparatus of a moribund Feudalism.

It was the pamphlet of a priest, the Abbé Sieyès, which gave point to the demands of the people for full representation in the forthcoming States General of France (May 1789). He opened his *brôchure* with the incisive questions and answers: "What is the Third Estate [Commons]?—Everything." "What has it been hitherto?—Nothing." "What does it intend to be?—Something." Among other pamphlets issued by priests we may notice that by the bold Abbé Grégoire, "Letters to the Curés," which helped to organize their opposition to the privileged hierarchy and to send up a majority of reforming deputies to the Estate of the Clergy; and these, joining the Commons of France in the first month of the Revolution, gave to that movement an impact which was resistless.

That suggestive thinker, de Tocqueville, has pointed out that in the Revolution all parts of the old fabric of government were subjected to simultaneous assaults which nowhere could be withstood. An outworn Feudalism was attacked by agrarian reformers; the absurdities and iniquities of taxation were denounced by the unprivileged classes; the absolute monarchy was assailed by all who wished to see reforms carried by the nation itself; while the Church, the chief support of the throne, had to bear the blows of many of her own sons and of thinkers outside who saw in her

the personification of superstition and intolerance. In its hour of need the Church of France had virtually no defenders. Obscurantism had done its deadening work. Learning had left her cloisters, and was now enrolled in the service of her critics. A retort more effective than clerical casuistry was the gag ; but the wit of Voltaire and the persistent ingenuity of Diderot and d'Alembert triumphed over repression, with the result that the courtiers and many of the higher clergy were fain to join in the laugh at their own expense.

Thus, both in a moral and intellectual sense the Church of France was a bankrupt institution. It might have been reformed betimes had its chiefs shown enough of energy, initiative, and self-sacrificing zeal ; but the lack of these qualities (strangely paralleled by the conduct of Louis XVI and his Ministers in May–June 1789) precipitated the crisis : so that the full fury of the revolutionary storm burst on an edifice quite unprepared to withstand it. More than half of the deputies of the Clergy joined the Third Estate as soon as it took the defiant step of declaring itself to be The National Assembly of France (June 17, 1789). The adhesion of the clerical reformers was one of the decisive events that determined the triumph of democracy over the wavering but in the main reactionary tendencies of the King and Court.

The *cahiers*, or instructions for the guidance of the deputies of the clergy, show the strength of the reform movement that was sweeping through the Church. Nearly all the *cahiers* insisted on drastic changes which would make France a limited monarchy, with Ministers responsible to the States General, taxes voted solely by that body, liberty of the individual, together with admissibility to all offices in the State, and the abolition of feudal and other abuses. A

majority of the clerical deputies also decided to abrogate the odious privilege by which the funds of the Clergy were almost entirely exempt from taxation. In vain did the higher ecclesiastics struggle against the new passion for freedom and equality. They were condemned by their own past, and sank helplessly into the stream which was to bear reactionaries and reformers to unimaginable lengths.

For the present the attitude of the populace, even at Paris, was by no means anti-Christian. After the capture of the Bastille (July 14, 1789) the Parisians confided the Revolution to the guarding care of the patron saint of the capital, Ste. Geneviève, and marched with votive and thankofferings to her shrine. But the Church as an institution was soon to feel the force of the new levelling tide. Almost the first destructive work of the National Assembly was the abolition of tithes in an ill-considered decree hastily passed during the memorable sitting of August 4, 1789. On that same occasion (well called "the St. Bartholomew of privileges") two *curés* proposed the strengthening of the law against plurality of benefices in the Church. Grégoire, whose inflexible firmness and love of justice made him the leader of the *curés*, proposed the abolition of annates, a revenue received by the Pope from vacant benefices. Other clerical privileges, local and personal, were sacrificed by their holders amidst scenes of great enthusiasm. On the motion of the Archbishop of Paris the sitting ended with the chanting of the *Te Deum* in the royal chapel at Versailles. Despite many faults of detail, the legislation of that memorable night deserves a tribute of praise for its generosity and thoroughness. The decrees were hastily worded, and that relating to tithes pressed unfairly on the *curés*; but in the main the enactments of August 4 have

pointed the way in which the Democratic Church of the future must work. Unfortunately they came too late. France, then in the throes of the first Jacquerie, looked on the sacrifices offered by nobles and clergy as the jettison of superfluous cargo in order to save the sinking ship of class privilege. Therefore, legislation which would perhaps have saved the Church had it proceeded in the ordinary way from her own Courts (as Talleyrand had desired it should), merely whetted the appetite of her enemies.

As summer waned to autumn, the Assembly threw itself with Gallic ardour into the somewhat profitless task of framing a declaration of "The Rights of Man." That which related to religious liberty claims a passing notice. It was with the utmost reluctance that the clerics of the Assembly admitted the idea of freedom of worship. Since the year 1787 Protestants had been tolerated, a concession due to the growing enlightenment of the times and the kindliness of Louis XVI. But freedom from persecution was one thing, and liberty of worship was another. Eagerly did the clergy now seek to maintain the ascendency of their Church on the plea that it was a guarantee of order. Mirabeau—the free-thinking, free-living noble of Provence who united in his person the vices of the old régime, the intelligence of the Voltaireans and the magnetism of genius—thrilled the Assembly by protesting against this claim of dominance.

"They speak to you incessantly of a dominant religion! 'Dominant,' gentlemen? I do not understand this word, and I need it to be defined to me. Is it an oppressing worship that is meant? Is it the worship of the prince? But the prince has not the right to dominate over consciences. Is it the worship of the greater number? But worship is an opinion. Now opinions are not formed by the result of votes. Your thought is your own—it is independent.

Nothing ought to dominate over justice; nothing is dominant except individual right."

There spoke the most inspiring thinker and the greatest political genius of the early part of the Revolution. His words bear the stamp of the Reformation. Protestant he was not; he had drunk of the spirit of liberty at the fountain of Voltaire, but the plea just quoted contains the essence of Protestantism.

An able champion of the long-persecuted Huguenots stood forth in the Assembly and preluded his speech by the words, "I am the representative of a great people." It was Rabaud-St. Étienne, eloquent son of the long-persecuted pastor of Nîmes. Coming from that centre of religious freedom, where the light of the Gospel had not been quenched by a century of oppression, he stood forth to plead, not only for his co-religionists, but even for the despised Jews, in words whose force was doubled by his well-known courage and consistency.

"He who attacks the liberty of others deserves to live in slavery. A worship is a dogma; a dogma holds to opinion; opinion to liberty. Instructed by the long and bloody experience of the past, it is time, at length, to break down the barriers which separate man from man, Frenchman from Frenchman."

Nevertheless the force of tradition and the instinct of solidarity, always so strong among the Latin peoples, carried the Assembly only half-way along the road leading to religious freedom. This clause of the Rights of Man as finally passed, ran as follows: "No one ought to be molested for his opinions, even religious opinions, provided that their manifestation does not disturb the public order established by law."

The supremacy of the Church was, alas, to be overthrown, not in the sphere of reason, but on the lower levels of passion and mob violence. There is the great

misfortune of the reforming movement of 1789. Hunger, jealousy, and perhaps the intrigues of the Duke of Orleans, stirred up the Parisian populace to the orgies of October 5, 6, which led to the overthrow of the Court at Versailles, the virtual capture of the King and Queen and their transference to Paris. Five days after the march of the maenads, which Carlyle has depicted with epic grandeur, there began the assault on the prerogatives of the Church, which ended the time of fraternal good-will, and heralded the dark days of hatred, schism and civil war. It was while the Assembly still sat at Versailles in expectation of its forthcoming removal to Paris, that the confiscation of Church property was proposed by that enigmatical figure, Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun.

The eldest son of the noble house of Talleyrand-Périgord, he had been disinherited and sent into the Church owing to an accident in early life which, in the eyes of his parents, unfitted him for success in the army or at Court. His subtle mind absorbed so much of the clerical training as to fit him for a life of diplomacy and intrigue; the rest he rejected with quiet scorn. Yet this gay young Voltairean, who mounted so lightly up the ladder of preferment, had a keen sense of what was due to the spirit of the age. He had vainly sought in 1782 to press forward reforms in the Church which would have strengthened the Church and abated the hostility to her. Now, when the storm had burst, and bankruptcy threatened the Commonwealth, he improved on a belated offer of certain clerics that some of the Church lands should form the security for an urgently needed national loan, by proposing (October 11) that the landed property of the Church should revert to the State. For this sweeping proposal he pleaded with great skill, urging the extreme

needs of the State, the wealth of the Church, its all but complete exemption from taxation for a long term of years, above all, the right of the nation to control any corporation existing within it. This last contention could be supported by historical proof. The Kings of France (as of England) had controlled and suppressed religious bodies and orders of monks, and Louis XV had banished the Jesuits. But now, for the reasons stated above, the assault was more determined. Hatred of the Church, jealousy of its enormous powers, zeal for Rousseau's doctrine of the absolute supremacy of the will of the nation, all told against the clerical claims. The sacrifices offered by the more generous clerics were not regarded. Democracy, now triumphant over the old absolutism, was determined to subject to its will the chief *imperium in imperio*, the Church.

The defence, though not strong or able, was passionate. The Abbé Maury, the cleverest of the clerical champions, pleaded against the policy of confiscation as a blow to the Church and to all property ; he rebutted the Socialist pleadings, that what the community had once conferred it could at will recall, and he protested against the indignities to which religion would be exposed. A new turn was given to the discussion two days later, when the most practical statesman of the day, Mirabeau, moved, first, that the property of the Church should belong to the nation provided that the latter supported the clergy ; second, that no parish priest should receive less than 1,200 francs (£48) with lodging. This was an open bid for the support of the parish priests in the Assembly ; but, to do them justice, they seem to have been little influenced by it. They had for the most part taken sides on this question ; and some of them continued to scout the proposal,

even though it promised comfort in place of penury to very many of their class. On the other hand, most of them supported the motion, chiefly, it would seem, on the ground of the harm done to religion by the luxury of the higher clergy. Thus the Abbé Gouttes said that the scandals in their ranks had extended to all priests the contempt due to some individual ecclesiastics. Others again boldly supported the doctrine of the sovereignty of the nation over all corporate bodies—a claim pushed to its logical conclusion by the impetuous young Garat, who declared that the State had the right, if need be, to abolish Christian worship in favour of a more "moral" religion.

The great lawyer, Thouret, brought the debate back to practicality by insisting that the property of ancient and wealthy corporations must rest on principles different from that of individuals, for corporations existed only by virtue of law; and what law created or guaranteed, could be reformed or transformed by law. Still more to the point was the speech of that sage counsellor, Malouet, who, while maintaining the imprescriptible rights of the nation over all property, claimed that the National Assembly had no mandate to deal with this great question, and that grievous harm would befall the cause of liberty if it were linked with a spoliating and exasperating edict. He also proposed that the question be referred to a special commission to report on the steps necessary for reducing the property of the Church to what was needful for the adequate support of religious worship and the relief of the poor.

Unfortunately the removal of the Assembly to Paris, the disorders there, and the passionate opposition of the higher clergy to every proposal on this question, served to defeat all efforts at compromise.

Finally, after long wranglings on the subject, Mirabeau carried his proposals, with the merely verbal change that the property of the Church was "at the disposal of the nation." A demonstration of the mob outside the Hall of the Assembly (near the north wing of the Tuilleries) may have decided some waverers to vote with the popular party: and the decree was carried by 568 votes against 346. More than 200 members were absent, and forty did not vote (November 2, 1789).

It is impossible in this essay to enter into the question of abstract right which is here at stake.[1] The determining factors in the situation were, (1) the great wealth and undoubted unpopularity of the Church of France; (2) the urgent needs of the State; (3) the vogue enjoyed by Rousseau's doctrine of the sovereignty of the general will; (4) the utter collapse of the old régime, amidst the ruins of which the reformers turned against the institution which was most wealthy and powerless.

The results of their action were incalculably great. During the debates the clergy once more offered to guarantee a loan that would meet the most pressing needs of the State; and the scorn with which this was waved aside in favour of confiscation aroused a widespread feeling of bitterness. That feeling widened and deepened when the obligation to support the clergy was renounced by the later revolutionary governments. It is futile to seek to deny that that

[1] See Fleury, *Institution au Droit ecclésiastique*; D. Maillane, *Histoire apologétique du Comité ecclesiastique de l'Assemblée nationale*; Buchez and Roux, *Archives Parlementaires*; E. de Pressensé, *The Church and the French Revolution* (Eng. trans., 1869); W. M. Sloane, *The French Revolution and Religious Reform*; A. Galton, *Church and State in France* (London, 1907), and *Religious Reform* (New York, 1901).

obligation existed, and was intended to be binding for all time. Mirabeau's decree bound together closely, and not merely for that generation, the question of confiscation of the Church lands with that of the support of the clergy. Indeed, the Jansenist, Camus, protested against the coupling of these two questions on the ground that the award of State pay was insulting to the Church. One can therefore picture the indignation which prevailed when, in the year 1793, even the "constitutional" priests were left unsalaried.

Finally the financiers of the young Commonwealth, acting as if the Church lands were an inexhaustible asset, proceeded (despite the warnings of Mirabeau) to throw on the market issue after issue of paper notes on the security of the new "Domaines nationaux"; and the successive falls in value of these notes brought about an unsettlement of prices which potently contributed to the general *débacle* in 1792–1793.

The dissolution of the monastic orders was decided on in February 1790, at least in principle; but the execution of the decree was deferred. In its full rigour it was not carried out until September 1792. There is little question that these Orders had outlived their period of usefulness. The mendicant friars were notoriously lazy; many monasteries were hotbeds of vice, and the zeal of the monks for learning and education had declined. The report of a commission of bishops on monasteries in 1768 condemned their many abuses; and Louis XV consequently abolished very many Houses. The nation was now more severe than the old monarchy, and except in the neighbourhood of well conducted Houses little regret was felt for their abolition. In some cases, however, especially in the south and west, the closing of the monasteries caused serious rioting. In the south it rekindled the old

animosities between Catholics and Protestants and led to civil strifes.

Far more significant for the future of democracy was the decree entitled *The Civil Constitution of the Clergy* (July 12, 1790). In one sense it was the outcome of Mirabeau's decree of November 2, 1789, which had the effect of making the clergy the salaried servants of the State. The Church being subordinate to the civil power, a logic-loving people might be expected to regulate Church affairs. This was what the Assembly attempted to do, in accordance with the proposals of its Ecclesiastical Committee. In that committee of thirty there were ten clerics, and the Gallican, as opposed to the papal, or Roman, feeling was strong. In accordance with its recommendations, the Assembly proceeded to draft a bill which would curb the powers of the Church. Appealing from the decrees of the Councils of the Church to primitive customs, they sought to break up the hierarchy, subject the Church to local authorities in matters of discipline, and sensibly weaken its connexion with the Pope. Their aims may be termed ultra-Gallican, or Jansenist; but unquestionably Rousseau's theory of the absolute sovereignty of the nation lay at the root of this memorable decree.

Stated briefly, it abolished all existing boundaries of bishoprics and reduced them to conformity with those laid down in the new Departmental System. A bishopric was merely a Department considered ecclesiastically. No Frenchman, cleric or layman, might thenceforth recognize the authority of bishops or metropolitans outside France—a clause aimed against papal control. Further, bishops and priests were thenceforth to be elected by all voters in their dioceses or parishes, Protestants and Jews being

allowed to vote. The pay of the clergy was also reduced; the stipends of the bishops ranged from £800 to £480. Curés were to receive from £250 to £48; they were obliged to reside in their several areas, and were under the surveillance of the civil authorities. Finally, the bishops, when elected, were forbidden to apply to the Pope for "canonical investiture," but were charged merely to report their election to him as the visible Head of the Church. This clause, it will be seen, violated the principles of Apostolical Succession and of Catholic unity which had been observed since the time of the Concordat agreed on at Bologna with Leo X. At once two parties formed themselves on these vital issues. On the one side was the Jansenist minority in the Church, backed up by all the non-Catholic elements of the nation: on the other were the Catholics and Ultramontanes who pleaded vehemently against the schism that must result in the Church and the indignities of the position into which her bishops and priests would be thrust. As the Bishop of Tréguier exclaimed, with Breton vigour, "Religion is annihilated: its ministers are reduced to the sad condition of clerks appointed by brigands."

The rigour of this decree is to be deplored, where it trenched on the domain of faith. While cutting at the root of the abuses of the old clerical system—its sinecures, pluralities, and shameless inequalities of stipend—the new Act crushed a venerable organism into a new mould, degraded its priests to the level of nominees of discordant majorities—a thing far different from that of election by the faithful in the primitive Church—and severed the bishops, and through them the priests, from the blessings which were believed to flow from the successor of St. Peter. In inter-

fering with matters of dogma, the Revolution entered into an alien sphere; and when early in 1791 its devotees sought to compel all the members of the National Assembly to take the civic oath (which implied obedience to the new decree) it abandoned its true quest, Liberty.

The mistake was fatal. The majority of the clergy refused the oath, declaring that conscience forbade them infringing their allegiance to the See of St. Peter. In the main it was the pliable, who, following the lead of Talleyrand, obeyed the behests of the Assembly. The recusants or "orthodox," numbering many who had hitherto been outwardly careless, carried with them the majority of the faithful, except in the case of the large towns; and when, later on, the Assembly deposed orthodox bishops and priests, armed force was often needed to instal their "constitutional" successors. These generally officiated to empty churches, especially in the country districts, while the faithful followed the orthodox priests into woods and wastes in order to receive the rites of the Church free from all taint of schism.

And yet, while we condemn the meddlesomeness and intolerance of the reformers, we must accuse the Papacy and its supporters of aggravating the crisis. A Pope wiser than Pius VI would have let it be known exactly where the *Civil Constitution of the Clergy* was incompatible with the discipline of his Church. Far from that, he declaimed against the Revolution and all its dealings with the Church. As early as March 1790 he had declared against the establishment of religious liberty, the abolition of clerical privileges and monastic orders, and the confiscation of Church property.[1] This declaration strengthened the efforts

[1] Débidour, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

of the reactionaries in France, and led the reformers to take steps for the effective muzzling of a pronounced enemy. After the passing of the above named Act the Pope's opposition gradually hardened; his reproaches stiffened the attitude of Louis XVI towards the Revolution and rendered the schism between "orthodox" and "constitutional" priests irremediable. Thus on both sides there were faults. If the reformers in their eagerness went beyond the limits within which the civil power can prudently act in the spiritual sphere, yet the Roman hierarchy embittered the strife. Some amount of friction there was certain to be between the proud and wealthy Church of the *ancien régime* and the levellers who accepted the *Social Contract* of Rousseau as their gospel; but the events recounted above precipitated an internecine conflict which with brief intervals has gone on to this day, and has involved other lands besides France.

The situation now became rapidly worse. Fanaticism kindled fanaticism. The old feud of Catholics and Protestants flared up again at Nîmes, Montauban, and in the dells of the Cevennes; la Vendée, the wooded district to the south of Brittany, began to mutter against the godless Assembly at Paris; and though civil war did not burst forth there until the King had been deposed and the Republic haled away recruits, its seeds were sown by the baleful decree of July 1790. Further, it is known that the King's decision to flee to the Austrians was formed early in 1791; his conscience, once very dull in matters of religion, was awakened by the attempts to coerce the orthodox priests and by the remonstrances that came from Rome. He declared that he had rather rule in Metz than be King of France on those terms.

Thus on all sides there accumulated proofs of the error of those who now sought to requite oppression by oppression, to force religion into their new political system, and in the name of the sovereignty of the general will, to fetter conscience. Other causes, of a financial and political nature, concurred to foil the hopes of the men of 1789. But the importance of the topic here considered has been recognized by all historians.

It is needless to describe the sequel. The anti-religious fury of Danton and Marat, the avowed atheism of Fouché and Hébert, the orgies of the Goddess of Reason, the overthrow of the atheistical faction by the deist Robespierre and his farcical attempt to instal the worship of the Supreme Being by a decree of the Convention—all this bears witness to the violence of the reaction against the old creed and discipline. The fervour of these men is undoubted; but it soon burnt itself out. Then, after the fall of Robespierre (July 1794), there came a time of disillusionment and despair. The resolve of the Jacobin minority to win its way forcefully to the social millennium had awakened a feeling of regret for the monarchy and the Roman Catholic creed. Reaction set in. It was checked by Bonaparte and those acting with him in 1795 and 1797; but on his return from Egypt in 1799 everything was uncertain. With the help of the army and malcontents in the Government he gained control of affairs (November 1799) and there ensued the period of the Consulate (1799–1804) which gave way to the Napoleonic Empire.

It soon appeared that the popular General would declare against the Jacobins (or extreme Republicans) and the quasi-philosophic sect of Theophilanthropists who in 1797–1799 had gained a following in the chief

towns. Great, however, was the astonishment when soon after the Battle of Marengo, he opened negotiations with the Pope for a renewal of the relations that had been broken off since the year 1793. Omitting all notice of the very complex negotiations of the years 1800–1802, we may inquire what were the motives which led the young warrior to frame his famous Concordat, or treaty with the Pope. Firstly, he was the son of a pious mother and was reared among the superstitious seafaring folk of Corsica. Though in later years he shared the free-thinking tendencies of his father and of the French Jacobins, yet he soon shook himself free from his passing passion for Rousseau, a process hastened by the sight of the fortitude with which French orthodox priests went to the guillotine or suffered the long pangs of exile for their faith. Further, it was clear by the year 1800 that the heart of France yearned after the old creed and cared little for Theophilanthropy or even for Protestantism. In fact the failure of Protestants at that time to gain the adhesion of Frenchmen is one of the puzzles of the period. The main question seemed to be between Atheism and Catholicism; and now that the steel of the Reign of Terror had shorn away the excrescences from the Catholic Church, she stood forth more attractive as a victim than she had been in the days of wealth and pride.

But which branch of the Church should he adopt? The "constitutionals" were installed in office wherever religious service could be carried on; and, though banned by the Papacy, they had by this time gained the allegiance of very many Frenchmen. The "Constitutional" Church stood for French nationality, the institutions of the Republic and independence of thought. Many of its clergy had married, thereby

associating themselves with the life of the people. A ruler whose aims were disinterested and purely patriotic would therefore certainly have strengthened the national Church and rejected all thought of compromise with the Papacy.

Bonaparte's aims were far different. He saw that the constitutional Church would never be recognized by the Papacy and by other Catholic Powers. He disliked the Liberalism of many of the "Constitutional" bishops, led by that champion of the ideas of 1789, Grégoire. The aims of the First Consul were more than merely French. In the words of M. Aulard—"His plan was to dominate men's consciences through the Pope, and to realize through the Papacy his imperial dreams, his vision of universal empire." That he would withdraw the Pope's support from the Comte de Provence ("Louis XVIII") also counted for something; as did also the consideration that orthodox Brittany and la Vendée would never be pacified until Rome and the orthodox clergy discountenanced revolt.

Such were the motives, purely political, which led to the so-called restoration of religion in France. As a matter of fact it had never ceased to exist; for except for a brief period in the Terror, the "Constitutional" priests and Protestant pastors had continued to officiate, though often under grave difficulties. But the religion which now was acknowledged was distinctly Roman, to an extent never known in the days of the old Gallican Church.

Briefly stated, the Concordat agreed on in 1802 between Bonaparte and the new Pope, Pius VII, was as follows:—The French Government now recognized that the Roman Catholic faith was held by the great majority of Frenchmen. Liberty of public

worship was accorded to the Church. The number of bishoprics was lessened. All existing bishops were required to resign their sees, whereupon the First Consul nominated their successors. The Church gave up all claim to her lands confiscated during the Revolution, as also to the collection of tithes. But, while surrendering vast wealth, the Church ended the schism that had existed since 1790, secured State recognition (though liberty of conscience was insisted on by Bonaparte) and bound itself more closely than ever to the Roman See.

Disputes soon arose as to the appointment of the new bishops, especially as thirty-five of the old "orthodox" bishops refused to resign and formed a "wee kirk," which persisted till the year 1893. But in the main Bonaparte had his way. During the critical years of his career, 1802–1807, he gained the support of the clergy in France and of the Roman *Curia* in Europe. As Emperor at the height of his power, he came into sharp collision with the Pope, annexed Rome, took Pius VII prisoner, had him brought to Fontainebleau, and talked of making Paris the centre of Christendom. Yet, though he inveighed against the Papacy, and called the Concordat a blunder, he knew full well that but for it he could scarcely have become Emperor. It was the power of the disciplined clergy which helped to bring France submissively to his feet.

Thus, in its struggle with the Revolution, the Church of Rome seemed to have conquered. She came to terms with a ruler, who, like her, sought to curb and suppress the principles of 1789; and, at the cost of great material sacrifices, she regained something like her old position in France. The overthrow of Napoleon and the advent of Louis XVIII improved

her position. Tithes were restored to her; and in the reign of Charles X (1824–1830) the Jesuits became once more a power in the State. It was by their advice and intrigues, and those of a secret religious body called the *Congrégation*, that that obstinate ruler was led to the reactionary courses which ended in the July Revolution of 1830.

Once again, during the Presidency of Prince Louis Napoleon in 1848–1852, the power of the Church in repressing democracy and promoting autocracy was to be witnessed; and it is well-known that the events of 1870 in France were not unconnected with the desperate efforts then put forth at Rome by the Ultramontanes on behalf of the absolute supremacy of the Papacy. In the political sphere the Jesuit intrigues of 1870 suffered an ignominious defeat; but the dogma of papal infallibility bound the faithful more than ever to the chair of St. Peter. The following years witnessed a renewal of the struggle between the civil and religious power in many parts of the Continent; and the persistent campaign waged by French Liberals against clericalism shows how deeply the study of their history has convinced them of the danger of the papal claims. The results of the first French Revolution were fatally compromised when Bonaparte signed his Concordat with the Pope; and it is not surprising that the champions of the Third Republic have annulled that reactionary compact and have urged on the separation of Church and State in France. Their union has produced constant friction; and it is the belief of many earnest Catholics that their Church will not lose by the separation.

The relations of religion to democracy at the time of the French Revolution offer a curious contrast

to those which are noticeable in the life of England at the same period. The following reasons for that contrast may be suggested. In the first place the National Church in England had held a secure place in the hearts of Englishmen ever since the time of the glorious Revolution of 1688; and though the eighteenth century witnessed a decline in her activity and an alarming increase in the stipends and sinecures enjoyed by the higher clergy, still these abuses were slight compared with those of the Church of France. Further, the Wesleyan revival then began powerfully to influence the Established Church for good; and the work of many devoted preachers brought home to the people a vital knowledge of evangelical truth. Further, the names of Clarkson, Wilberforce, and John Howard will remind the reader of the close connexion between evangelical religion and philanthropy in our land. Thus, whereas in France the philanthropic movement was mainly the work of Voltaire and the philosophers, in England it was an offshoot of reviving religious zeal.

It is also worthy of note that the new impulse towards democracy which marked the years 1770–1780 manifested itself in ways that were on the whole friendly to religion. Apart from the evanescent Wilkes episode, we may say that the reform movement is traceable to three sources in the year 1776. That year witnessed the American Declaration of Independence, which in many ways was a manifestation of the old Puritan spirit. Then also there appeared Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, which traced out the path of economic reform soon to be trodden by Pitt; and then also was published Major Cartwright's pamphlet, *Take Your Choice*, which pointed the way to a drastic reform of Parliament—

a question that was to occupy the attention of English Radicals for more than a century. Cartwright founded his plea for popular government on a religious basis. "The principles of politics (he wrote) are the principles of reason, morality and religion." "Scripture is the ultimate criterion both in public and private conduct." All that a statesman needs is "a knowledge of a few of the plain maxims of the law of nature, and the clearest doctrines of Christianity." "The title to liberty is the immediate gift of God and is not derived from mouldy parchments." He demanded that the constitution of our land should be made as simple as possible so that it might be taught to children along with the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. He further asserted that the right to a vote was a God-given right.

Such were Cartwright's main principles. He never entered Parliament, as he scorned to use the means then used for the gaining of votes: but his long and strenuous advocacy of reform (he lived on to the year 1824) gave consistency and dignity to the popular movement. It is curious to notice that the People's Charter of 1838 differed only in one item (that of the abolition of the property qualification of members) from the programme drawn up by Cartwright in 1776. We can hardly over-estimate the gain to the cause of constitutional freedom resulting from the practicality, religious tone, and in a sense the conservatism of Cartwright's scheme. Instead of calling Britons to the task of framing society anew on the illusory basis of a compact in which every one was free and equal; instead of setting up that dangerous abstraction, "the general will," as the universal arbiter or dictator, Cartwright summoned his countrymen to a task which was attainable on the well worn

lines of the national life. His teachings were forgotten in 1792–1795 amidst the passions excited by the French Jacobins; but ultimately the clubs founded by Cartwright and his coadjutors carried on the torch of freedom through the war-wasted space of the Napoleonic supremacy and handed it on to the younger men who, not long after Waterloo, initiated the second and more successful struggle for reform.

The influence of Tom Paine during the height of the French Revolution was considerable; and many of the political clubs then founded were imbued with the anti-Christian spirit then prevalent in France. But owing partly to the coercive measures adopted by Pitt (who sternly opposed reform in those times of excitement) and still more to the disappointing results of the French Revolution, the mania for imitating the Jacobins of Paris died down. After 1815, as has been noted, the reform agitation, in the main, went on the lines laid down by Cartwright and the earlier Radicals.

Once again, in the spring of 1848, imitation of French revolutionary methods led English Radicals on to dangerous ground; but the collapse of the great Chartist demonstration on Kennington Common once more showed that Englishmen were shy of departing from constitutional ways of urging their demands. After the failure of Physical Force Chartism Maurice and Kingsley did good service by pointing to the many self-help agencies—Trade Unions, Co-operative Societies and Friendly Societies—whereby workmen could better their position and prepare themselves for wider political privileges in the future.

Thus, in our island there has never been that divorce between religion and reforming movements which was so pronounced in pre-revolutionary France.

Our political problems have been easier than those which beset that land in the years 1789, 1815, 1830 and 1848 ; but it is highly probable that Great Britain owes much to the absence of a dominant and luxurious hierarchy, and still more to the simplicity of organization and the insistence on the essentials of Christ's teaching which have characterized the communions professing the Evangelical faith. A survey of the past seems to warrant the belief that the Church of Christ, so long as she carries out faithfully the spirit of her Founder, need not fear the attacks of unbelievers, still less the shocks now and again given by advancing democracy. Christianity has lost ground only when Christians have put their trust in institutions, wealth, or prestige, and have lost touch with suffering humanity. But the Church Universal has recovered that ground when, either by the warnings of her sons or the attacks of her enemies, she has been brought back to the first principles of her faith. Thus even the mistakes of Christian organizations in the past and the blunders committed by the assailants, which are alike so marked and so appalling in their results, seem to afford ground for hope that the nations of to-day, in their search after a higher state of social welfare, will win their way nearer to the heart of Christ's teaching.

Certain it is that that teaching makes powerfully for the principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. So long as the Early Church kept to the spirit of the Gospel, it formed a genuine democracy. Only when that fraternal communion borrowed from the organization of the Roman Empire did it gradually crystallize into an oppressive hierarchy. Subsequently, in the ninth and tenth centuries, the Church was crushed into the mould of Feudalism, and, later still, into that of the

Absolute Monarchy. As has been shown above, it was against these alien and intrusive elements—these governmental cuirasses donned for protection but soon found to be painfully constrictive—that the new democratic impulse made war, whether at the time of Wycliffe and Huss, or at that of the Anabaptists, or in the more secular movement headed by Rousseau. The best minds in the Church of France in 1780–1790 urgently desired drastic reforms; and the *curés*, who did the real work of the Church, almost to a man welcomed the Revolution as the harbinger of better days. At first the democratic attack was solely against the temporalities and the organization of the Church; and, had it stopped there and not invaded the realm of dogma, the results would have been wholly for good. By attacking the consciences of the faithful, the Revolutionists opened up long vistas of strife, persecution and reaction. But it cannot be too clearly understood that in this, the fiercest and most baleful struggle between Christianity and democracy, the assault was limited at first solely to the outworks and adjuncts of the Church of France. There it won a notable triumph, which tended to clarify the life of that overfed organism. The attack failed against the inner citadel of belief. The lesson of that success and of that failure is of infinite value alike to the Church Universal and to Democracy. For it shows by what means the former may become the potent ally of the latter; while political reformers ought for all time to realize the all-important truth, that their power ends where the domain of conscience begins.

XI

The Social Influence of Christianity as Illustrated by Modern Foreign Missions

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ARGUMENT.

Introduction—Recognition of the influence of the Foreign Missionary Enterprise in promoting Social Betterment—The Changed Attitude of the Individual Convert to his Social Environment—The Timely Ministry of Missions to the Needs of a Community in the process of transition—Missions as accelerated Social Evolution—A new Environment of Transforming Influences.

1. Changes in Personal Character which accompany Conversion, and their Social Significance in Mission Fields.

2. Reformed Habits in the Individual and their Helpful Influence in non-Christian Society.

3. The Reconstruction of Family Life and its Attendant Blessings to Society.

4. Transformations which pertain to the Larger Sphere of Commercial Life, and affect Long-Established Social Institutions and Customs.

5. The Moulding Power of Missions upon National Development.

6. The Economic and Commercial Value of Missions.

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XI

The Social Influence of Christianity as Illustrated by Modern Foreign Missions[1]

THE influence of the foreign missionary enterprise in promoting social betterment is now claiming glad recognition from the Church. It may surely be counted, as is true of every phase of mission success, one of the happy signs of divine favour to the modern Church, yielding fresh evidence of the presence of power, and of the unfailing adaptation of the Gospel to minister in helpfulness to all the ages, and to all the races of mankind. This manifest uplift of the Gospel among alien races has now become capable of demonstration in both its evangelical and ethical aspects to an extent which supports and reinforces our faith in the constructive social mission of Christianity both at home and abroad.

The individual convert to Christ's religion in mission fields is awakened not only to a new conception of his personal relations to the Deity, but becomes conscious of a changed attitude toward his social environment. Duties which hitherto hardly appealed to him,

[1] The writer has drawn upon his larger work, *Christian Missions and Social Progress*, for some of the material which has been incorporated in the subject matter of the present essay.

now arrest his attention; his awakened conscience responds to the call of obligations which he has formerly regarded—if indeed he has been at all sensitive to their appeal—with profound indifference; habits which have never been called in question soon fall under suspicion; traditional customs which affect the welfare and happiness of others, or have a depressing effect upon social standards, are viewed in a new light, and are challenged with new insight and courage, wherever they are morally open to objection. The whole environment of life, with its code of social ethics, and its conventional ideals, becomes subject to scrutiny, and is tested by principles which have hitherto been only partially, if at all, operative as binding upon the conscience.

A similar, though somewhat differentiated, manifestation of the social power of missions may be discovered in their timely ministry to the needs of a community in the process of transition from a lower to a higher status. This is illustrated by the fact that the missionary enterprise as now conducted is an educational force of stimulating energy. The mission school, and numerous higher institutions of learning, work a quickening intellectual transformation, and generate new mental activities which banish for ever the old inertia of brooding ignorance. It has become already an essential feature of the missionary propaganda that the call of the awakened mind should receive due attention, and the literary output of modern missions now ministers with fine discernment to the instruction and culture of the mind and the heart. Along industrial lines, also, much has been done, in combination with lessons of spiritual inspiration and moral guidance. A large philanthropic purpose has developed into noble efforts at rescue and ministry

to those who need the outstretched hand of love and skill and charitable devotion. This benevolent service of missions proves itself a further incitement to humane efforts on the part of enlightened native communities. It becomes also an important part of the missionary programme to provide through its educational agencies, and as the result of its moral training, the class of men whose discernment and capacity are especially needed in times of social and national transition. It will be seen that an entirely new outlook is given to life in its mutual relationships, and that fruitful ideals are furnished, which give direction and incentive to social progress in formative periods.

Christian missions represent, therefore, what may be designated in unscientific language as accelerated social evolution, or evolution under the pressure of an urgent force which has been introduced by a process of involution. They grapple at close quarters with a social status which, in the light of moral standards, may be regarded as in a measure chaotic, "without form, and void." They have to contend alone at first, and perhaps for several generations, with primitive conditions, the confused result of the age-long struggles of humanity. The spirit of order and moral regeneration has never brooded over that vast social abysm. It has never touched with its reconstructive power the elements heaped together in such strange confusion. Christian missions enter this socially disorganized environment, with its varying aspects of degeneracy, ranging from the higher civilization of the Orient, which is by no means free from objectionable features, to the savagery of barbarous races, and, in most cases without the aid of any legal enactments, engage in a moral struggle with certain old traditions and immemorial customs, which have long had their sway as

regnant forces in society. They deal with a religious consciousness hardly as yet touched by the spiritual teachings of Christ, so that the splendid task of a matured Christian experience as represented in missions is to take by the hand this childhood of the heart and mind, and, by the aid of the rich and effective resources of our modern civilization, put it to school —leading it by the shortest path into the largeness of vision and the ripeness of culture, which have come to us all too slowly and painfully. What we have sown in tears backward races are now beginning to reap in joy. In many foreign fields missions must face conditions which are so complex, so subtle, so elaborately intertwined with the structure of society, so solidified by age, and so impregnably buttressed by the public sentiment of the people, that all attempts at change or modification seem hopeless, and yet slowly and surely the transformation comes. It is effected through the secret and majestic power of moral guidance and social transformation which seems to inhere in that Gospel which Christian missions teach.

As Christianity advances from heart to heart in this and other lands, it extends from home to home, and involves almost unconsciously a large and generous new environment of influences which works for the reformation and gradual discrediting of the old stolid wrongs of society. It produces in foreign communities a slow, almost unrecognized, yet steadily aggressive change in public opinion. It awakens new and militant questions about stagnant evils. It disturbs and proceeds to sift out and disintegrate objectionable customs. It stimulates moral aspirations, and quickens a wistful longing for a higher and better state of society. Christianity has been building better than it knew in establishing its missions in the heart of

these ancient social systems. The sociological awakening in Christendom is not more impressive than the hitherto almost unnoticed achievements of missions abroad in the same general direction, in securing the enfranchisement of human rights, the introduction of new social ideals, and the overthrow of traditional evils.

In illustration of the above general statements, attention may be directed more particularly to the following aspects of the subject:

1. The personal character of Christian converts, by virtue of its influence and example, becomes a ministry which contributes to the welfare and moral cleansing of society.

2. The transformation of individual habits in Christian communities works a gradual change for the better in the larger collective life.

3. The family relationship soon responds to the influence of this salutary change in its individual members, and the whole economy of domestic living is thus affected.

4. The larger realm of communal or tribal life is also permeated by forceful moral influences which work a profound change in its spirit and practice. Social institutions and customs wider in their scope, and more invincible in their sway, respond in their turn, and revolutionary changes come about, as the result of the more or less aggressive infusion of Christian principles.

5. The national development is in time affected, and changes which may be classed as political and judicial in character, with sometimes an international significance, are introduced into the evolution of backward races.

6. Commercial relationships are found to be not

altogether outside the sphere of missionary influence, and new opportunities, as well as new facilities having a manifest social import, frequently follow the advent of missions.

7. The evangelical uplift of the religious life in a non-Christian environment is generally found to be of incisive social significance, and produces many and great changes for the better in the practical, everyday routine of life.

The whole missionary propaganda in its larger aspects becomes thus an individual, and eventually a racial preparation for service, not only in the interests of the evangelistic expansion of the Kingdom of Christ, but for the purification and higher welfare of the immediate social environment.

A more detailed consideration of these various specific statements, and the presentation of a few typical illustrations, drawn from actual experience, will reveal more clearly the practical outcome of the social evangel among backward races.

Changes in Personal Character which accompany Conversion, and their Social Significance in Mission Fields.

1. It is the special function of the Gospel to transform individual lives, but a group of transformed individuals forms at once the nucleus of a changed society. One man, for example, becomes temperate, moral, honest, truthful, industrious, and exemplary in an all-round sense ; if then he is multiplied by ten, or a hundred, or possibly by a thousand, we have a social transformation which is revolutionary in its power. A mighty force, working perhaps silently and unobtrusively, is put into action throughout society. It works like some great law of nature, which

accomplishes its mission without creating any violent disturbance in its environment. A spirit hitherto unknown begins to assert itself, and to commend things that are lovely and of good report, sending out an impalpable influence, which seems to be able in some mysterious way gradually to transform into its own likeness the whole social system in which it moves.

It is not to be inferred that the individual character which is developed in a non-Christian atmosphere is in every instance alike defiled, or lacking in those commendable traits which command respect and admiration. As a rule, however, the character which comes to its maturity out of touch with the Christ life, unconscious of the sacrificial love revealed in the Cross, and separated from the restraints and incitements of Christian morality, is always in some, and often in many, respects tainted and marred. In its primitive savagery it is usually dominated by degrading superstitions, and has not as yet been touched by even the initial forces of those moral monitions which are from above. Something new, incisive, and radical, like the spiritual energy of the Gospel, must enter the social system, and work with a transforming power—a power which is sufficient to arouse ambition, to quicken discernment, and to formulate ideals—or heathen society will remain for ever helpless, and fixed in its primitive moral trend, with possibly a certain veneering of spurious civilization, which will only serve to conceal some of its latent tendencies.

The reconstruction of the character through the illuminating instructions and the sacred persuasions of the Gospel is indeed the first task of missions, and the wealth of evidence which the foreign fields yield to illustrate and confirm missionary success in this particular is in a high degree effective and convincing.

There are shining examples of men and women in high stations, whose personal character as Christian converts has developed into a social, and even a national, asset of wide influence and high value. Khama, the South African Chief, with his temperance principles and moral stability, exercising a forceful influence throughout all his realm, is a conspicuous illustration. The same may be said of Daudi Kasagama, the King of Toro, the royal evangelist, who has sent his thanks to the Church Missionary Society for the Gospel which their missionaries have brought to his people, and who interests himself in evangelistic tours throughout his realm, distributing the bread of life, and building churches. In the same section of Africa is Apolo Kagwa, the Christian statesman of Uganda. In India we find such representative examples as Sir Harnam Singh and his excellent wife, devoted to the spiritual and social welfare of the large environment throughout which their influence extends. The Pundita Ramabai is proving herself the social benefactor of distressed and needy multitudes of her own sex. The late Kali Charan Banurji was a social force, as well as an exemplar of sane and wise statesmanship, and the late Kenkichi Kataoka of Japan may be described in the same words. These are but types of many "saints in Caesar's household," whose social sympathies and personal influence claim our respect and admiration.

There are multitudes, we may safely say many thousands, in mission fields, who are serving in evangelistic and educational circles with devotion and great usefulness, whose social helpfulness has in it the religious stimulus and the moral beauty of the Gospel itself. Every mission field could furnish an honour roll of such names. They abound in India, China, and Japan; they have multiplied also in other fields.

Numbers of them have won the martyr's crown as the reward of their constancy and loyalty, and have thus left an inspiring memory in the communities which knew them. In some of the most unlikely regions of the earth the record of these devoted native workers along the lines of Gospel reformation is especially noble and inspiriting. The life work of Pao, whose service in the Loyalty Islands has been commemorated by a monument erected by the foreign and native communities of Lifu, where he laboured, is already one of the classic stories of mission history. The South Sea natives who have co-operated in the evangelism of New Guinea, to them a field of foreign service, of peril, and much sacrifice, have exhibited a spirit of consecration, and accomplished a work for the social redemption of its savage people, the results of which have brought a permanent change in the outlook of the entire island. Had we time to visit the scattered isles of the Pacific, we should find whole communities presided over spiritually by devoted converts, whose personal influence has worked mightily for the religious and social uplift of those who a generation or more ago were in the depths of savagery.

We cannot dwell longer upon this special aspect of our theme, but what we desire particularly to note here is that personal character of the quality which missions produce, through the transforming power of Christianity, is a social asset, the value of which cannot be gainsaid. Through a God-possessed individuality larger and more general influences may be expected. The Gospel, like a seed planted within, grows outward. It does not touch social life with any permanent and saving power, except by way of secret fructification in the soil of the individual heart. A regenerate man becomes a new and living force in unregenerate society.

A Christian community, even though small and obscure, is a renewed section or moiety of society. Both are as leaven in the mass, with a mysterious capacity for permeating the whole. This has been declared by an accomplished writer to be the distinctive mark and method of Christ's religion.

Individual character, moreover, is the point where responsibility secures its hold, where public spirit may be effectively cultivated, where what may be called the social conscience may be awakened. The inspiration of the individual for the benefit of the mass is the first secret of social progress, just as, on the other hand, the demoralization and paralysis of the individual work in the end the ruin of society as a whole. The enlargement of the intellectual resources of any single member of society, and the cultivation of his mental powers, such as the development of the faculties of discrimination, judgment, intellectual perception, forethought, discretion, prudence, facility in adjusting means to an end, all add to his value as a factor in social life, and are equivalent to a substantial contribution to the well-being of society. The economic regeneration of an idle, shiftless, demoralized, unproductive, and especially of a destructive, individuality, into an industrious, productive, and peaceable character, is equivalent to the addition of so much live capital to the working force of the community. Thus the awakening in a man of a new capacity for the appreciation of moral principles, the establishment within him of a new basis for fidelity, loyalty, firmness, stability, and singleness of purpose, in harmony with higher spiritual standards, become an increment accruing to the moral forces of society, which has in it the promise and potency of a nobler domestic, social, and civic life. Herein is the making of better homes,

purer domestic relations, a higher and finer social temper, a sounder and truer type of citizenship. The refinement wrought in rude or gross natures by Christianity, the moral stamina and the serious purpose imparted to timid, listless, stolid, or self-centred characters, add an important contribution to social resources.

> "'Tis in the advance of individual minds
> That the slow crowd should ground their expectations
> Eventually to follow."

The character of a people is, after all, the only sure foundation upon which any substantial hope of improvement can be based. Religious character in the individual is the good soil out of which alone the higher social virtues can spring.

Reformed Habits in the Individual, and their Helpful Influence in non-Christian Society.

2. We are familiar in our own environment of Christendom with the battle waged by the moral forces of Christianity with the great evils of society. The same struggle is well known in mission fields, where Christian efforts at reform have to contend with deeply entrenched habits, in an atmosphere of individual degeneracy, which while it increases the difficulty of success, at the same time gives additional lustre to the victory. Christian converts in mission fields are thoroughly instructed as to the duty of temperance, and they are almost without exception of one mind on the subject, and, with possibly rare exceptions, they are everywhere total abstainers. The perilous snare of the opium pipe appeals to them in vain, as also the insidious lure of gambling. The struggle with temptations to immorality may be severe, and in certain environments sometimes disappointing, but vice is

never condoned, and the moral standards of Christianity are honoured, and usually admirably exemplified. In many mission stations temperance societies, anti-opium leagues, and White Ribbon Associations have been formed, while reformed gamblers are found here and there on the Church rolls. The drift of heathen despair toward suicide is checked; the shiftless and wasteful idleness which is characteristic of so many savage communities, or the passion for war and plunder which possesses untamed natures, gives way under mission discipline and culture to aspirations after the security and good order of peaceful relations, and the rewards of honest toil. The native African has learned the very alphabet of industry and frugality from Christian missions. Such institutions as that of the United Free Church of Scotland at Lovedale, South Africa, not only guide young men and young women into paths of spiritual light, but transform the life that now is into a happy and useful career by teaching some industrial art which makes them of value to the world, and gives them the privileges and joys of self-supporting service. No one in the home Churches can realize, and the missionaries themselves hardly appreciate, the immense social changes in the direction of orderly and useful living which have been inaugurated in hundreds of African communities. "The kraal-going missionary has made the kirk-going people," is the quaint epigram which describes the result of the early efforts of the United Presbyterians in Kaffraria. This is not, however, the whole truth, since that same missionary has transformed the warrior into the modern ploughman,and put useful tools into idle hands. Industrial missions, and also industrial features in the curriculum of missionary training, are no longer an experiment in many African fields. Ploughs,

which, in the dramatic language of a native admirer, are said to "do the work of ten wives," have broken furrows of civilization in African society. Self-supporting industry has brought a new consciousness of self-respect.

The social value of the personal virtues needs no elaborate vindication. Habits of duplicity, untruthfulness, and dishonesty form a social incubus which missions have happily lifted to an extent which may well command our attention. It does not invalidate the force of this statement to find, so far as our ability to demonstrate it is concerned, that it is less convincing than we could wish. Christian living is largely influenced by environment, and high-toned character, even under the culture of Christian influences, is in a true sense a growth rather than a ready-made product. It is surely beyond question that Christianity once honestly received and appropriated by the spiritual nature works for the quickening and nourishing of those personal virtues which the Word of God both commends and commands. It must not be forgotten, however, that in so doing, especially in mission fields, the Gospel code must contend with a combination of dominant heredity, adverse environment, and overmastering temptation, which adds immensely to the difficulty of moral renovation. It requires more Christianity to the square inch of personal character—if the expression is allowable—to produce a given amount of moral stamina where a thoroughly demoralized heathen personality is to be made over, than where a naturally high-toned and responsive character is to be brought into deeper accord with a moral code already perhaps instinctively revered, and in large measure observed.

If we search through mission fields we shall find new

standards of truthfulness identified with Christian character, and this is true also as regards honest dealing. The following statement in one of the annual reports of a prominent mission in China indicates a representative aspect of Christian influence in the direction of moral reform: "A heathen man was asked whether he saw any good points about the Christians. 'Yes,' he replied, 'there are three things I am bound to admire: (1) there is no need to watch our crops around their village; (2) they neither sow, sell, nor swallow opium; (3) they cause little trouble in paying their taxes.'" Here is rare and downright honesty toward their neighbours accredited to Chinese Christians, and, what is more remarkable, toward their government. There is much unanimity in the testimony of missionaries as to the sincerity of native Christians, and their moral steadfastness. The message of Christianity everywhere in mission fields includes a programme of social righteousness, and that many sinful natures and disorderly lives are transformed is a result which those best acquainted with the facts will unhesitatingly corroborate. One of the most brilliant moral qualities that can pertain to a man in Asiatic countries, giving him a distinction as rare as it is wonderful, is to be known as absolutely truthful and honest. The badge of simple truthfulness is by general consent the "Victoria Cross" of morals in the Orient. It becomes a social boon everywhere to be able to trust others, to feel confident that treachery, duplicity, and deception need not be feared, but rather that a sense of honour, a respect for obligation, and a devotion to every loyal claim, are assured.

In other respects, as for example the cultivation of the physical virtues of cleanliness and neatness, Christianity has inaugurated socially valuable changes wher-

ever it has entered. It is almost invariably the case that converts mend their ways by banishing uncleanness both from their persons and their surroundings. There is hardly a mission field where the Christians cannot at once be distinguished from the heathen by the attractiveness and wholesomeness of their personal appearance. There seems to be a happy magic in Christianity to cleanse both within and without.

The Reconstruction of Family Life and its Attendant Blessings to Society.

3. The story of transformed homes, of elevated and purified family life, and of the hallowing of all domestic relationships, is one of the most precious chapters in missionary history, and, we may add, represents also one of the most helpful influences which can be consecrated to the promotion of social betterment. In the effort to hallow and purify family life we stir the secret yearnings of fatherhood and motherhood; we enter the precincts of the home, and take childhood by the hand; we restore to its place of power and winsomeness in the domestic circle the ministry of womanhood; and at the same time we strike at some of the most despicable evils and desolating wrongs of our fallen world. If parental training can be made loving, faithful, conscientious, and helpful, if womanhood can be redeemed and crowned, if childhood can be guided in tenderness and wisdom, if the home can be made a place where virtue dwells, and moral goodness is nourished, we can conceive of no more effective combination of invigorating influences for the rehabilitation of fallen society.

If we inquire what missions have done to regenerate the family, to purify its moral and disciplinary forces, and to make it a nursery of refined social idealism, we

discover a record of ennobling influence which is indisputable. Woman, as the central figure of the home, has been crowned with a dignity which is distinctively Christian, and in the home life of Christian communities has been delivered from the humiliation and suffering incidental to those great historic curses of Oriental society, polygamy, concubinage, and easy divorce. Child marriage has been either wholly abolished, or brought within more reasonable limitations, while the social miseries of Oriental widowhood have been greatly mitigated. Much has been accomplished toward the release of woman from those conditions of enforced seclusion and minimum privilege which traditional custom in the Orient has imposed upon her, and all this has been effected not, let it be noted, with indiscreet precipitancy, but with wise caution and sobriety. Family training and discipline have been improved and chastened, and domestic life in its practical, everyday aspects has been made more refined. It is noticeable that a spirit of tenderness has been cultivated in many communities toward helpless children, securing their protection, and guaranteeing to them an affectionate guardianship, saving them, in some instances, from cruel neglect, or heartless destruction, in places where no organized societies have been instituted specially to watch over their welfare.

The education of woman is a notable aspect of mission influence. The missionary school for girls has been an innovation which was at first received with amazement, as well as with a certain measure of amused incredulity, throughout the Oriental and heathen world. The response has been a surprise, and has become a gratifying social benediction to Oriental society, being now recognized as such by those who at first regarded it

with disfavour. The touch of educated womanhood has given an added charm and value to the home life of the Orient, and has stimulated a spirit of reform toward all that concerns the status of woman in Oriental society. The attitude of the Oriental world outside of Christian circles has been wonderfully changed in its temper and aspirations concerning the lot of woman and her social position and privileges. A cultured womanhood in India, in China, in Japan, and elsewhere, is claiming its place under Christian auspices, and is enriching the home life of those countries, and extending its influence throughout society, as the result of missionary insistence upon the rights and privileges which properly belong to womankind.

The traditional evils which have afflicted the domestic life of heathenism have winced under the quiet rebuke of the Christian rule of morals. A vigorous reform has won its way amid the domestic laxity which prevailed even in some of the most advanced nations of the Orient. Christianity has been resolutely unwilling to compromise with the darling sins of the Oriental household, and, while governing its protest by tactful and wise self-restraint, it has nevertheless insisted on the sacredness of family relationships, and on the inflexible code of the Word of God in its application to domestic life. There are to-day multitudes of homes in Asia and Africa, and in the Islands of the Sea, where sanctified affection, conscientious fidelity, loving discipline, and refined companionship, trace their entrance to missionary influence.

Transformations which pertain to the Larger Sphere of Communal Life, and affect Long-Established Social Institutions and Customs.

4. The uplifting influence of missions is not only

domestic; it is tribal, and extends to the communal life of the people, and in time works revolutionary changes in the tone and trend of social development. Radical transformations in this larger realm of public life and traditional custom cannot be accomplished with strident haste and violent aggressiveness, but must be brought about slowly, yet no less surely, after the usual manner of great social changes. A new spirit, almost imperceptibly at first, manifests itself in society; public opinion changes; old customs, time-honoured, but none the less objectionable, are modified or abandoned. A better and finer code of propriety is instituted; sweeter ideals gradually win their way; a process of refinement goes on in sensitive souls; more gracious desires, higher ambitions, and nobler aims, gladden and dominate the spiritual natures of men and women. The higher life begins to claim the attention of the thoughtful; the tribal heart begins to be agitated with aspirations after improvement, and to fix its desires upon the goals of culture. Opinions and customs which are in themselves worthy are conserved and accentuated; conditions and indulgences that are evil, and ought to be abandoned, begin to wane, and to feel the blight of contempt and shame. Evils that have been dominant for centuries, and have darkened the lives of unknown millions, are, by common consent, put under a ban, and are slowly eradicated, although in many instances they make a desperate fight for life. Less than a generation ago cruelty reigned in Uganda, with the sanction both of its prevailing religion and of immemorial customs. Human victims to the evil spirits were numbered by the thousand and punishment by mutilation and torture seemed to be the pastime of those in authority. Bishop Tucker relates

that at the death of Suna, the father of Mtesa, more than two thousand human beings were slaughtered, in accordance with a ghastly custom of unknown antiquity. Christian missions entered Uganda, and when the death summons came to Mtesa himself, not a single human life was sacrificed.

The pitiful condition of the low caste population of India claims the attention and enlists the ministry of the missionary, and a new phase of philanthropy and humane civilization enters into Indian history. It is attracting the notice of intelligent and thoughtful men in the higher castes, who frankly acknowledge that the sympathetic friend, and almost the only efficient helper of the depressed classes in India is the missionary. A few words may be quoted from a recent report of the Travancore Census, issued by order of the Maharaja, and penned by the Census Commissioner, a distinguished Hindu of the Brahman caste. He writes: "But for these missionaries these humble orders of Hindu society will forever remain unraised. Their material condition, I dare say, will have improved with the increased wages, improved labour market, better laws, and more generous treatment from an enlightened Government like ours; but to the Christian missionaries belongs the credit of having gone to their humble homes, and awakened them to a sense of a better earthly existence. This action of the missionaries was not a mere improvement upon ancient history, a kind of polishing and refining of an existing model, but an entirely original idea, conceived and carried out with commendable zeal, and oftentimes in the teeth of opposition and persecution. I do not refer to the emancipation of the slave, or the amelioration of the labourer's condition; for these always existed more or less in our

past humane governments. But the heroism of raising the low from the slough of degradation and debasement was an element of civilization unknown to ancient India." The same remarkable change is found as the result of the Dutch Missions in Celebes, where Bishop Brent discovered a splendid object lesson in the reformation and civilization of a degraded horde of savages, through missionary influence. "In Minahassa," he writes, "a hundred years ago the natives were headhunting savages; to-day it would be difficult to find anywhere a more orderly and self-respecting people."

So, we might run through the list of barbaric and bestial customs, and illustrate the magical power of mission influence in transforming primitive tribal life. A Christian cannibal, we will venture to say, cannot be found in Asia or Africa, or amid the old-time savagery of the island world. Christianity everywhere has insisted upon the sacredness of human life, and has implanted in the hearts of its followers refined instincts, which are sure to turn with disgust from the orgies of a cannibal feast. Similar statements might be made concerning the taste for inhuman sports, or the cruel folly of human sacrifices. Even within a generation, ghastly orgies once so well-known in that bloody inferno—the hinterland of the African West Coast—have disappeared, and its official shambles are now in ruins. The shocking ordeals of superstitious heathenism have been, with rare exceptions, banished. The brutal and cruel punishments of prisoners have been mitigated by a more humane code of penal administration. With the entrance of the missionary has been awakened also a new recognition of duty toward the sick, the decrepit, and those enfeebled by age, with other helpless and dependent members

of society, whom it was customary, according to the heathen code, either to neglect, or put to death, as worthless and burdensome to society. We may visit under mission administration homes for the orphans, and asylums for the lepers, and here and there refuges where tender ministrations are given to the insane, the blind, and the deaf and dumb.

Social changes still more revolutionary in character, and of wider scope, can also be clearly traced to mission influence. No one can reasonably doubt that to missions belongs the credit of initiating the crusade against footbinding in China, the culmination of which has been the formation of an influential anti-footbinding society, conducted under the direction of philanthropic foreign residents, supported by intelligent and progressive Chinese, and eventually issuing in an imperial edict, forbidding and banishing the custom. As long ago as 1870, the mission schools for girls began to contend for unbound feet, and various educational organizations and societies, largely under missionary auspices, have steadily and successfully maintained a determined attitude of antagonism toward this foolish and cruel fashion.

Again, in the anti-opium crusade missions have led the van, and have interested themselves, on moral and philanthropic grounds, in working for the banishment of this social curse. Now all China is aroused, and the crusade has been fortified by imperial orders, aimed at the effective prohibition of the opium habit throughout the empire. In May, 1906, twelve hundred missionaries affixed their signatures to a memorial on the subject of opium, which, in the August following, was presented to the Imperial Government by the venerable Viceroy of Nanking. In September of that year the Emperor issued the edict which directs

that the opium traffic shall cease within ten years, and the wording of the document is strikingly similar to the phraseology of the memorial.

The services of missions in the overthrow of the slave trade, and the abolition of slavery, in large sections of the world, have hardly received the attention they deserve. It is within a decade that slavery was officially ostracized among the Barotsi, and also in Uganda, and in both instances the revolutionary reform has been traceable to mission influences. The attitude of missions toward caste, to which reference has just been made, affords another illustration. One of the most inflexible and overmastering social tyrannies which the world has ever known, it is not to be expected that changes will be wrought, except by a long and slow process of disintegration. The overthrow of caste by any violent or arbitrary methods seems impossible; yet everywhere the missionary has proved himself to be the friend and liberator of the Pariah, and especially in Southern India have low caste people had opened to them a career of advancement, and a hope of social betterment, which represent a practical reversal of the immemorial traditions cherished by the higher classes, many of whom would regard even a sneer as too flattering an attention to a despised Pariah. This process has as yet touched Indian society only in spots, but it may prove to be the beginning of a social change which will eventually develop into revolutionary proportions.

The educational campaign of missions has been a direct ministry to the higher nature of backward races, having aroused dormant powers of development, quickened the aptitude for progress, given a finer tone to life, and created a new atmosphere, in which society as a whole develops with an upward,

aspiring trend. Educational cravings have already become a passion in the awakened nations of the East. The whole higher life of society has been touched by the stimulus given to industrial training by organizations for social improvement. The ministry of wholesome and instructive literature, including Bible translation, has been of inestimable value to races who were hardly acquainted with modern knowledge before the coming of the missionary. The service of medical missions is one of the most romantic chapters in the history of human philanthropy. The mitigation of the ancient brutalities of war, and the turning of the hearts of Christian communities toward the recognition of the higher blessings of a peaceable and law-abiding social order, may all be traced, in large measure, to the power of the missionary evangel.

The Moulding Power of Missions upon National Development.

5. Have missions a quickening and formative influence upon national life and character? The question opens a large and fruitful subject for discussion and research. It may be treated both from an academic or historical point of view, and from the standpoint of practical apologetics. We can readily believe that God maintains a sovereign control over the historic development of nations in modern as well as in ancient times. The Hebrew historians described with realistic diction the controlling sovereignty of God among the nations, and in forms of speech which made clear their vivid recognition of the direct agency of an overruling Providence. The modern historian, however devout his mood, may not, perhaps, use Biblical formulae, being influenced by the dominant idea of theistic evolution now so

regnant in the philosophy and science of our times; but this does not necessarily indicate any deliberate intention on his part to ignore or to banish the idea of God's sovereignty, and His supreme guidance of the contemporary life of nations. He simply brings his trend of thought, together with his literary style and terminology, into conformity with prevalent philosophical theories of the mode and order of divine activities as related to historical progress. A new view of the divine methods of working requires new forms of expression, which, while giving prominence to secondary causes and evolutionary processes, do not rule out the First Cause, or make the existence of a supreme intelligence any less essential in a true philosophy of history.

Christian missions, in their broad and multiform results, doubtless have a part to play in the history of our times, corresponding closely to that training of Old Testament ritual and discipline which can be so plainly traced in the calling and governance of the Jewish nation. History is, in fact, repeating itself. The Old Testament dispensation as a school of national life finds, in a measure, its counterpart in the activities of modern missions among existing nations. Our own Christendom is in a large sense mission fruitage, and now Christianity, true to its Founder's purpose, is becoming the teacher of all nations, in very much the same sense that the ancient dispensation was the schoolmaster for the preparation of a single elect nation for its place in history. The Bible is full of the national life, not only of the Hebrews, but of contemporary peoples; and if a modern Bible of mission history could be written by inspired discernment we should surely discover the same almighty sovereign purpose working for the accomplishment

of its high designs in the training and destiny of modern nations. The ulterior object of missions, although not the original or chief incentive to their prosecution, is to prepare men and women to be better members of human society, and more helpful participants in the social and national development of the generation to which they belong—it being understood that the most effective method of accomplishing this is to bring them as individuals into right relations to God and His law. The attainment of this object implies a steady advance toward a higher national life, and a fuller preparedness of the people to be clothed upon with the fresh, new garments of a cultured civilization.

The future of nations is therefore in a very real sense marked out and determined by the reception they give to missionary agencies, and the ascendency which Christian ideals attain in their individual and social development. The "principle of projected efficiency," so emphasized by Mr. Benjamin Kidd, is an excellent formula for the larger utility and helpful tendency of missions in social and national evolution. That projected potency which works for the future building up of nations is embodied in missionary activities. To any one pessimistically inclined, who has some knowledge of Oriental nations, it may seem to be a practically hopeless undertaking to lead them to appreciate and strive after the finer ideals of Christian cultivation. It is just in this connexion that the lessons of history are pertinent and incontrovertible. Teutonic culture and Anglo-Saxon civilization—let us not forget it—have developed from the fierce temper and barbaric social code of the earlier races of Northern Europe. Thus, along this road of slow and painful advance, nations now exemplifying the

highest social refinement of the age have already walked, and others will in due time follow in their footsteps. The Japan, the Korea, the China, and the India of to-day, as compared with the status of those same nations a generation or two ago, are examples of an Oriental Christendom in the making. Faith based not only on the promises of God, but upon visible historical precedent, may rest assured of this, but there must be patience while the " increasing purpose " of the centuries is being realized.

Questions which are identified with the national life of a people pertain to such matters as the form of government, the establishment and enjoyment of civil rights and privileges, the conduct of politics, the enactments of legislation, and their administration as law, the personnel of public service, the adjustment of international relationships, and the defence of the State. In connexion with such questions the influence of Christianity need not be revolutionary in order to be helpful. It may exercise a transforming and guiding power which will lead a nation by easy stages of progress out of comparative barbarism into the heritage of modern culture. In many respects Eastern nations left to themselves in isolation, dependent upon their own resources, had reached, probably, their natural limit in the progress toward a higher civilization. If there was to be further advance, some outside help was seemingly essential. This might come as a gift from without, or, as in the case of Japan, it might be largely self-sought, and assimilated with an intelligent recognition of its value. It need not necessarily denationalize them, but should rather shape their further development in harmony with national characteristics.

In this connexion the influence of Christian mis-

sions has been both timely, and, to a remarkable degree, adapted to this higher ministry. The unique part which each nation has to play in human history, and the special contribution of service which it is to render in the interests of world civilization, will lose none of their distinctive features through the entrance of the leaven of a common Christianity. In this age of the world, nations can no longer remain isolated, or live a separate, exclusive life, out of touch with the rest of mankind. International relationships are already world-embracing. Missions, therefore, in so far as they contribute to the moulding of the national life of peoples whose historic development seems to have been hitherto arrested, are a factor in shaping and furthering the world's international amenities. It is by no means a matter of indifference to Christendom what kind of a nation Japan is to be; it is, in fact, a question of absorbing interest and deep moment. China is already an important factor in the sphere of international politics. The whole East is stirred with a new life, and points of contact with the outside world are fast multiplying. The service which missions have thus far rendered among these different peoples in preparing them for creditable entrance into these wider relationships is of higher value than is generally recognized.

The missionary programme not alone in its evangelistic and ethical impact, but in its broader educational discipline, in its literary culture, its uplifting character, and its more intelligent outlook upon history and practical politics, gives a certain tone and direction to national life and progress. It trains better men for government service, and thus has an influence in the improvement of administrative methods. Out of six Moslem incumbents recently appointed

to high positions in the Punjab Government, it is significant that five of them were educated at the Forman Christian College of the American Presbyterian Mission at Lahore. It aids in the adoption of wiser and better laws, and in the reformation, and, where needed, the humanizing of the judicial proceedings. As nations or tribes become enlightened they begin to appreciate the true meaning and value of liberty, to cherish more intelligent ideals of patriotism, to form new conceptions of the dignity and responsibility of national life, and to play their part with honour, when occasion requires, in international affairs. Loftier standards of public service, and more intelligent recognition of the import and value of international and interracial relationships take their place in a growing civic consciousness. This influence of missions upon national life may not be so apparent to an outside observer as other results more easily discerned, but it is real, and to one who can obtain a comparative historical view of the growth of the body politic it will soon discover itself. It requires a discerning historic insight for us to trace the lines of Christian influence in the development of the nations of Christendom, but no one doubts that Christendom as a whole, in its national as well as social outcome, has been in certain important respects the product of Christianity.

The awakening of China, the progress of Japan, the development of Korea, the evolution of a new India, the establishment of constitutional government in Turkey, can never be historically treated without giving a large meed of credit to missions. "The awakening of China," remarked Tuan Fang while on his recent visit to America, "may be traced in no small measure to the hands of the missionaries. They have

borne the light of Western civilization to every nook and corner of the Empire." A single glance at the literature of the new era in China, issued under missionary auspices, reveals the instructive and forceful bearing of the literary campaign of missions upon the rapidly changing tendencies of national life. China has been put to school to study the encyclopaedia of modern knowledge, and learn the secrets of the historic growth and development of Christendom from the literature which missionaries have provided. After the Renaissance came the Reformation; will history repeat itself in the Far East?

The Economic and Commercial Value of Missions.

6. It is a fair question to ask whether commerce is in any sense historically indebted to missions? The debt of missions to commerce, however, need not be minimized. The earliest Christian missions followed the great trade routes of the world, and since the age of steam and electricity missionaries have looked to commerce as their means of transport, and as affording them many alleviations in their exile from home. Whatever evils and sins may be justly charged to commerce, they are not essentially identified with it, and its nobler spirit, as well as its more honourable methods, may be regarded as both favourable and serviceable to the work of the missionary. On the other hand, it can be easily demonstrated that missions have proved helpful to commerce by broadening the world's markets, swelling the ranks of both the consumer and the producer, and enlarging the range of both supply and demand. It is not too much to say that the increasing opportunities of international commerce are due in part to the cooperation of missions by reason of their influence in removing

hindrances to an entrance among native races, and in promoting to some extent an interchange of outgoing and incoming commodities.

Progressive native races invite commerce, and offer ever enlarging scope to its activities. Education gives an inquiring outward vision to provincial minds, and calls for the best the world can bring to it of the material facilities and industrial achievements of the higher civilizations. The services of the missionary as a pioneer explorer, and a promoter of industrial advance, have been useful to commerce. The merchant often reaps a harvest in trade where the missionary has previously sown the seeds of ethical and social transformation. In this general sense the making of a broader and finer national life is the guarantee of enlarged commercial intercourse; while, on the other hand, commercial wealth and prosperity without moral stamina and political integrity will inevitably work for the downfall of a nation. A study of the growth of trade in the countries of the Far East will show that it has generally been contemporaneous with missionary progress, which has manifestly had a part to play—not often conspicuous, indeed, but no less real—in its promotion and development. The ethical influence of missions has been helpful to commerce by its insistence upon high moral standards, by its training in matters of good faith and moral rectitude, by its suggestions, at least among mission constituencies, of improved financial methods, and by a measure of indirect stimulus to trade with the outer world, while at the same time creating a demand for the conveniences and facilities of modern civilization.

The missionary convert is recognized as the advocate and exemplar of new standards of business honesty. Integrity is acknowledged as a Christian obligation.

A new code of market-day morals has been introduced, and incitements to frugality and provident habits have been one of the practical lessons of the missionary to his native friends and followers. In many fields he has been instrumental in establishing Savings Banks, and in initiating Provident Funds, with a view to rescuing converts from the temptations and dangers of debt. Livingstone's "open path for commerce" in Africa has produced phenomenal changes in the economic development of a large section of that vast continent, and almost everywhere among savage races missionary pioneering has resulted in an open door for trade with the outer world. Mission outposts among dangerous and savage tribes have marked the line which separates safety from peril to the trader, and have differentiated the sphere of trade from the regions of rapine and barbarity. The immense possibilities of commerce in the Far East give a special significance to the acknowledged influence of missions in stimulating trade intercourse with hitherto closed regions in that part of the world. Missionaries have, moreover, been instrumental in many fields in the development of neglected resources of the soil, and in introducing improved facilities, both agricultural and industrial. Mackay in his busy workshop in Uganda was the pioneer of the present "Uganda Company, Limited," and a similar statement may be made of missionary initiative in the "Papuan Industries, Limited," and other industrial ventures in mission fields. A close study of the political and commercial value of missions will award them a far more prominent place in the activities of the modern world than we have been accustomed to assign to them. It behoves Christendom to give attention to this fact. Expansion as an imperial

policy should not be along military lines alone, nor should it be inspired exclusively by political and economic designs ; much less should it be with a view merely to commercial exploitation. Christian merchants and men of affairs may justly regard missions as an ally of commerce, and an agency of high value in the promotion of mutually advantageous trade relations.

The Social Significance of Reformed Standards of Religious Faith and Practice.

7. Is the social life of non-Christian races uplifted and made more salutary by an evangelical reformation of religious faith and practice ? In answering this question we should not ignore or minimize all that is socially valuable and morally commendable in the ethical incitements and restraints of non-Christian faiths. In several respects we may find their influence to be worthy of respect and conservation. It is safe to say, however, that every admirable and morally wholesome tendency of the social code of ethnic faiths is likewise endorsed and nourished by the influence of Christianity ; while in this connexion it may be well also to recognize the fact that there are certain social features more or less condoned and upheld in Western nations which are not traceable to Christian instincts and tastes, and which missionary teachers have no desire to introduce and perpetuate elsewhere.

Interesting subjects for discussion are suggested in this connexion by such questions as the following : What social effects of value may be expected from a more spiritual conception of religion than is usual amid the formalities of ethnic faiths ? What results of an elevating character may a community hope for which has succeeded in breaking with idolatry ?

What general progress may come from the overthrow of superstition? What public benefits may result from a more intimate association of a pure morality with devout heart religion? What measure of social uplift may be secured by a high order of religious leadership? What beneficial effects may be expected to accompany the establishment of religious liberty, and the suppression of the persecuting spirit? And, finally, what happy results may accrue in the social life of the home and the community from a faithful and cheerful observance of one day in seven as a Sabbath of rest and religious culture?

The perils of formalism are recognized by all students of the religious progress of the race, and no one can doubt that it detracts seriously from the social value of religion. It deadens the moral perceptions of the individual member of society, so that his example to others, who quickly detect externalism, becomes profitless, if not wholly inoperative, and the incentive which attaches to sincerity and heart fervour is either wanting, or leads in the wrong direction. "If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" is the scriptural monition in all such cases. The Gospel quickens the spiritual perceptions, and guides men into a more adequate comprehension of what religion should mean to humanity. It gives a joyous and hopeful outlook to life, guides the conscience aright, resists the tendencies of pessimism, opens the door of usefulness, and restores, as it were, a character to manhood which is of public value. Is it not plain that the character of a spiritual Christian is a valuable asset of society, his example a power for good, his kindness of heart a benediction, his missionary zeal a leaven in the social lump, and his life itself an evangel?

The decline of idolatry assuredly opens another vista of social advance. The waning of the worship of idols lifts a national and racial peril, which tends irresistibly in the direction of degeneracy, and, if persisted in, must result in moral captivity, sorrow, and demoralization. The idolatrous world of to-day is no exception to this law of social deterioration, which has worked inexorably through all ages, and will continue so to do as long as man clings to the worship of what is beneath him in the scale of creation, thus humiliating his manhood, and forfeiting his standing in the ranks of God's nobler creatures. The dominance of idolatry works in many ways to the detriment of society. It is costly, and involves an enormous economic waste, without adequate or helpful return. It imposes needless suffering upon multitudes through their vain dependence upon the assumed healing power of a graven image. In seasons of pestilence and calamity the thoughts of whole communities are turned toward the dumb, unresponsive idols, believing them to have the power of intervention and relief. It becomes, therefore, a beneficent ministry, as well as an imperative duty, for Christian missions to endeavour, with all kindness and tact, yet with loving firmness, to discredit idolatry and to lead men to the more rational worship of the true God. Testimony from every section of the mission world indicates that the reign of the idol is waning, and that men are becoming manlier, and women nobler, because of the passing of its deadly sway.

Superstition, like idolatry, is a social incubus, and for similar reasons. It involves the same tendency to useless expense, amounting to scores of millions annually. It implies the same vain struggles, the same blind gropings, the same debasing fears, the

same cruel devices, and the same misguided efforts to meet the problems, anxieties, and emergencies of life, with only wasteful and worthless remedial expedients. There is no more pitiful and depressing spectacle than to witness the impotent appeals and the futile sacrifices—many of them costly and horrifying—to which the deluded victims of superstition resort, in order to escape impending perils, and to secure deliverance from present calamities. The spectral throng of demons seems to haunt the imagination of the victim of superstitious delusions. The wiles of sorcery, and the often cruel decrees of masters of the Black Arts, not only are regarded as law to be implicitly obeyed, but they represent, as a rule, the last hope of despairing souls. To the fraudulent, haphazard diagnosis and quack treatment of these wizards of sin many of the most important and vital interests of life are submitted. Can any one doubt that these besetments of superstition involve an incalculable social injury wherever they hold sway, and that their debasing power where the best interests of society are concerned is literally beyond estimate? The witch-doctor may assume almost any rôle of criminal attack upon society which his puerile ignorance or knavish design may suggest. The attempt to prevent or cure disease by superstitious means deprives a community of the advantage of sane and scientific ministrations. In the same misguided fashion false and ruinous judgments are pronounced concerning the secrets of success and prosperity, when the real credit should be accorded to commendable diligence, faithfulness, and capacity. It follows, therefore, that the man who by the proper use of means has achieved success becomes at once an object of unjust suspicion, and malicious evil is quickly plotted against him, on

the ground that it is only by the aid of the spirits that he has been able to surpass others. He is thus summarily condemned as an enemy of society, in league with demons, so that disaster, and perhaps death, are considered but his rightful deserts.

In every mission field—we may say it without hesitation—the break with superstition is constantly growing more pronounced and uncompromising. In many places—even amid the darkest African environment—we may read of souls set free, and enabled to effect a final breach with the dismal and enslaving past, culminating often in the burning of charms, the destruction of fetiches, and the stout-hearted, resolute casting out of the whole brood of unseemly errors. Men and women breathe more freely, and life is brightened with new hopes, while in thousands of communities the dread visit of the witch-doctor has been exchanged for the gentle evangel of the messenger of Christ. The distressing terrors of superstitious fears give place to the calm trustfulness, the cheering assurance, and the orderly peacefulness of a Christian community. The whole spirit and atmosphere of society can thus be transformed by the freedom and joy of an abiding hope in Christ. Communities hitherto demon-ridden may sit clothed and in their right mind, under the protecting care of the all-loving and all-powerful God, who becomes their "refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

It is also an essential feature of the missionary programme to bring about in every community those wholesome social results which follow the association of morality with religion. Missionary instruction, whether religious or educational, may be regarded in all its bearings upon moral standards as unreservedly committed to the advocacy and defence of the moral

code. That this struggle toward the goal of morality as inseparably identified with religion is producing hopeful results in mission lands cannot be doubted. Testimony to this effect is to be found in the Report of the recent "South African Commission on Native Affairs." The Commission was appointed in 1903, and its Report was published in 1905, under the title of "The Natives of South Africa," followed in 1909 by a supplemental volume, entitled "The South African Natives." In the Report of 1905 the influence and necessity of religion as an incentive to good morals is strongly advocated, and it is stated that "the weight of evidence is in favour of the improved morality of the Christian section of the population," while it is further asserted that "there appears to be in the native mind no inherent incapacity to apprehend the truths of Christian teaching, or to adopt Christian morals as a standard." Christianity is declared to be one great element for the civilization of the natives, and the Commission is of the opinion that regular moral and religious instruction should be given in all native schools. It can be clearly demonstrated from the criminal records of native society in South Africa that only an infinitesimal percentage of those who are connected with Christian Churches is convicted of crime. It was stated in a recent Church Council that the proportion in Natal was only four per cent., and, according to the testimony of Mr. H. H. Pritchard, Public Prosecutor of Boksburg, out of 13,000 natives convicted there of offences against the law, ranging from being without passes to the crime of murder, only four were in the membership of one or other of the native Churches.

The supplemental volume of 1909 contains (page 229) this important testimony: "One thing is clear.

The results achieved by the missionaries of the various Churches show that by religious and moral training and education adapted to his needs and capacities, the native can be fitted to fill a place of great usefulness in the community. He can be raised to higher levels of living. He can be disciplined in habits of independence and self-control. But the work of the missionaries needs general recognition and support."

So also morality in India, China, and Japan is being recognized as a necessity in a true and wholesome life. There is much ethical discontent at present in Japan. The standards of Christian morality are attracting thoughtful attention, and exacting in some instances the most respectful and even reverent admiration from the leaders of national thought. It is being frankly acknowledged among Japanese patriots that the morals of Christianity are needed in Japan as well as elsewhere. Exemplary religious leadership is also a public benefit which missionary success brings to society. Pastor Hsi's name is fragrant in the Churches of Christendom wherever his biography, by Mrs. Howard Taylor, has been read. He represents hundreds among Chinese Christians of like character and devotion. Dr. Neesima has been honoured and loved in the West almost as much as in his own country, and a throng of noble Japanese pastors, philanthropists, and educators have followed in his steps. Dr. Imad-ud-Din—preacher, scholar, and author—of India, and a long list of men of devout character and sterling worth, as well as of sincerely pious women, whose lives have been a power in all sections of the country, give added lustre to the Christian leadership of the Indian Churches. The Rev. Boon Boon-Itt, whose recent decease is so deeply

lamented, was a "crown of rejoicing" in Siam. Pao, the "Apostle of Lifu," one of the Loyalty Islands, may be justly regarded as an evangelist of heroic type. The native preachers and teachers in New Guinea, gathered largely from among the converts of the South Sea Islands, have been men and women of courageous spirit and lofty faith. Bishop Crowther may be counted as a typical man of God amid the African darkness. Numerous pastors, teachers, and evangelists, of fine record in other African mission fields, including Madagascar, might be named in this list of worthy religious leaders. There have been many native women, also, who have served in various missions as teachers, visitors, and Bible-women, with signal credit to the Christian name.

The promotion of religious liberty is another ennobling social result of the missionary propaganda. The persecuting spirit has long been a relentless foe to the social peace and happiness of mankind. Untold misery has been inflicted upon human society through the workings of religious tyranny, which has proved itself one of the most subtle and resistless instruments of injustice and cruelty that, in various ways, and under different auspices, has tortured the race. It is only by slow and painful struggles that religious freedom has been attained in certain favoured portions of the earth. Even the lessons of a generous tolerance in religious opinion and practice have been learned by many with more or less reluctance, and in some instances only after bitter conflicts, bringing in their train much distress and suffering.

In connexion with the entrance and work of the missionary, and no doubt, in a measure, in response to his influence and the beneficent trend of his enterprise, a great and marvellous change has come about

in the attitude of many foreign states toward religious liberty. Credit should be given, however, in this connexion, and that generously, to the political influence of Western power, as embodied either in their colonial administration, or in their treaty provisions, which has secured immunity from religious persecution on the part of Asiatic or African states. This is well, and a cause for thanksgiving, but its effectiveness after all depends largely upon the courage and energy with which these public guarantees are guarded by the foreign powers. It may be noted with gratitude, however, that in India, Burma, Uganda, and elsewhere under British rule, as well as in almost all the Native Feudatory States of India, and in Siam, under her enlightened ruler, there is recognized freedom of conscience. This is also notably true in Japan, since the voluntary withdrawal, in 1873, of the Edicts against Christianity, and the promulgation of the Constitution in 1889, with its famous Twenty-eighth Article granting full religious liberty. It should never be forgotten that to Verbeck, an American missionary of the Reformed Church, as much as to any other one man, the establishment of religious liberty in Japan is due. Not that this fact is formally and officially on record in Japanese history, but rather that it may be credited to him as the result of his unofficial influence and steady advocacy of the principle of religious liberty, during the entire period of his contact with the Japanese authorities in the formative era which shaped to such a momentous extent the future of the empire. The Japanese themselves are now discovering that at the time of their great national transformation Verbeck was an inspiration, a guide, and a prophet, in one of the most strenuous periods of their history. On the day of his funeral

a remark of a Christian Japanese layman was overheard, to the effect that: "To this man alone we Japanese are indebted for the religious liberty we enjoy to-day."

The benign provision of the Sabbath as a day of rest and religious privilege has been carefully guarded and conserved by missions. The "Japan Sabbath Alliance," constituted in 1902, is creating a public interest in behalf of a becoming respect for Sunday. In India, also, there are organizations whose object is to safeguard the Sabbath as a sacred rather than a secular day. The "Lord's Day Union" of Calcutta, and the "Lord's Day Observance Committee" of Madras, are examples. Thus, in various mission fields, in spite of difficulties and hindrances, the Lord's Day is honoured in native Christian communities, and the social as well as the religious life of converts has become in this respect exemplary and creditable. Only one who has lived amid the turmoil, confusion, and noisy business activity of the non-Christian Sabbath, can fully appreciate the quiet dignity, the peaceful calm, and the charming social uplift which the introduction of the Christian Sabbath, with its privileges and the hallowing power of its sanctity, brings into a community where it is gladly and cheerfully observed.

We may say in conclusion that the outstanding need of the world just now is the exaltation of religion to its proper place, as the controlling and guiding force in the entire life of man—individual, social, national, and international. We would not hesitate to add also, as a suitable and even necessary corollary of this attitude toward religion, the recognition of Christianity as a divinely appointed and supremely efficacious ministry to the higher nature of man, em-

bodying the noblest rule of righteousness for the practical guidance of his life, with Christ Himself as its central figure, combining in His exalted personality the supreme fact of an Incarnation, and the compassionate mission of a Saviour.

The study of social phenomena, especially in their ethical relationships, without due attention to a supernatural revelation, or rather without taking into consideration religious influences from a higher source than man's immediate environment, is like the study of plant life without reference to the sun, or the investigation of astronomical and meteorological phenomena while ignoring the solar system. Some light, no doubt, may be obtained, but it will be only dim, partial, and inadequate, as compared with the clearer vision which a more inclusive survey will give. The basic moralities, and the uplifting spiritual tendencies, of a truly helpful social code will be found in the last analysis to be given from above, rather than evolved from beneath.

XII

Modern Scientific and Philosophical Thought Regarding Human Society

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ARGUMENT.

I. Much Confusion of Thought exists regarding the Value of Scientific or Philosophic Theories of Human Society, but some things stand out clear amidst the Confusion : (1) It is too soon to speak of a science or philosophy of Human Sciences ; (2) Practice must precede Theory ; yet (3) Moral and Social Sciences are not helpless ; (4) Society progresses by Reflexion ; (5) such Reflexion is not exclusively philosophical ; (6) Difference between "ordinary" "scientific" and "philosophic" consciousness is over-accentuated ; (7) Philosophy and Ordinary Reflexion are rooted on the same general Experience ; (8) The Contribution of Philosophical Thought needs to be valued more accurately.

II. The Contrast between Scientific and Philosophical Thought regarding Human Society and *Christian* Thought is Injurious to Both, for (1) Authoritative Religious Truth cannot suffer from examination ; (2) Intellect and Emotion must not be divorced in the field of Social Science : and (3) Christianity is wronged in being distinguished from the purpose of science and philosophy or denied the use of their methods, results and spirit.

III. Christianity is not identical with any Special Theory of Social and Political Life, and our conceptions of Citizenship are due to Greece and Rome, and not to the Hebrews.

IV. While too much value cannot be attributed to the Ideals of Christianity they are practical hypotheses that gain as well as give meaning in being applied. (1) The splendour of the Christian ideals lies in the greatness of their promise ; but (2) the life that reveals it must be experienced and (3) the significance of the conception native to Christianity has been only slowly discerned by poets and philosophers. (4) The same service is being done by science and philosophy in regard to human society. (5) Hence the Christian Ideals must be placed in the context of the ordinary world.

V. Philosophy appears when some form of civilization has grown old. (1) Its primary function is to be a witness to the unity of the world, and the wholeness of life. (2) To-day the task of scientific and philosophic thought is to teach the implication of man in mankind, of mankind in man, and of nature in both. (3) In endeavouring to substitute one metaphor for another, that of society as an organism for society as a machine, it is not only recognizing a principle, but seeking to follow out its consequences. (4) It insists that rights can be claimed only on the ground of the performance of duties, for bankruptcy lies in the way of claiming the one and neglecting the other. (5) The attempt might be made to gain rights without accepting duties, but this is not likely, for the acquisition of power generally teaches the use of it, and the Christian ideals will right themselves after every trial, provided they are trusted.

XII

Modern Scientific and Philosophical Thought Regarding Human Society

THERE is much confusion of opinion regarding the value of scientific or philosophic theories of Human Society. We do not know with any precision what to expect from them in the way of practical guidance. We are divided between mistrust of abstract theorizing and our clear consciousness of the efficacy of systematic thought in other provinces. We can hardly maintain that ignorance of social laws brings no risks, or deny that mere empiricism in politics, which finds the right way by exhausting the possibilities of error, is a very expensive method. On the other hand we are not prepared to take the advice of Plato and make our philosophers kings—if we could find them—or our kings philosophers. We do not know how either to accept or to reject the pretensions of the political theorist, nor what value to set upon his contributions. And I am not sure that we do not sometimes accept what we should reject, and reject what we should lay to heart.

But there are one or two things which stand out clear amidst the confusion.

In the first place, it is too soon to speak of a science

or philosophy of human society. It has not come as yet. There is no theory which commands or has a claim to general acceptance. "Principles taken upon trust, conclusions tamely deduced from them, want of coherence in the parts and of evidence in the whole"—the well-known plaint of David Hume, applies in this province. Not that human society is devoid of its own essential structure and functions. There are conditions without which it could not arise, or maintain itself. Human Society is the expression, and, by far the fullest expression, of human nature, and is as much subject to laws. But our accounts of them differ. There are many theories of the origin and nature of human society and, at best, only one of them is correct. Political philosophy at present is very much in the condition of the science of biology before Darwin. Its votaries are accumulating data; there is much observation of social phenomena and we are rich in "Reports." But the architectonic principles that shall give systematic coherence to these data, and set free their significance, have not emerged. Our reflexions upon social phenomena are tentative, hypothetical and sporadic. The sciolists have all the confidence. Men who have some sense of the severity of the scientific or of the negative dynamism of the philosophic method have only hope. They find the path of systematic thought much obstructed in this region. It is not easy to be dispassionate, or to strike the personal equation in social matters. Human society is very complex; it comprises the premisses and all the conclusions of man's interaction with his fellows and with his natural environment. It is the expression of endlessly numerous and diverse passions and warring purposes; and all of these are in constant process of change. It is never the same at different epochs; history repeats

itself, but never accurately. The changes in the structure of society are all organic, for it is a living thing: and all organic changes travel through and modify the whole structure.

In the second place, there is a very real sense in which practice must precede theory. The meaning of an action is never clear nor full till after it is done: we must see how it interacts with its context and await the issue. Hegel, who did not want speculative boldness and who has done more towards social philosophy than any other writer except Plato and Aristotle, warns the philosopher away from the didactic method. Philosophy comes too late to say how the world "ought to go." The fact must come before the theory: stars and planets before astronomy: the moral and social world *before* moral and social philosophy. "Philosophy gathers up the meaning of a civilization which is growing old: it comes out, like the owl of Minerva, in the evening twilight."

But if the moral and social sciences can never be predictive in the way in which natural science can foretell the tides, it does not follow that they are helpless. Society changes *because* it is permanent. It is "immortal through generation," to use the phrase of Plato. "There is an immortal principle in the mortal creature." There are conditions without which *no* society can come to be or prosper; and we are not ignorant of all of them. The vast experimentation of human history has not been void of results.

Tradition is continuous and cumulative, and society progresses, were it only in the poor sense that it is becoming more complex and that both its evils and good are on a larger scale. This takes place through reflexion, by which the lessons of the past are extracted, and it is the special business of philosophy to *reflect*

—to turn the mind inwards or backwards upon its own operations and results.

But it is an error to attribute such reflexion exclusively to philosophy : just as it is to think that babes and sucklings are wise *because* they are babes and sucklings. Philosophy suffers detriment from being distinguished too abruptly from ordinary experience. When the philosopher is about to speak, men are apt to strike an attitude, not always reverential. He is supposed to lack the experience of ordinary men, as if he did not feel when pinched, or ginger were not hot in his mouth ; and he is supposed also to be more indifferent to the teachings of experience. Does he not employ a peculiar method of his own, moving to his results along an *à priori* road ; and does he not delight in abstractions ? He is very well-meaning and estimable, in his own transcendental way, but is he not a somewhat poor judge of the shadows of the cave and an unpractical guide in the business of living ? The man of the world turns a deaf ear to the theorist, quite unconscious that in rejecting the theories of his contemporaries he is the victim of the theories of their predecessors. But Naaman, the practical politician, never does listen to Elisha the prophet. " Are not Abana and Pharphar better than all the waters of Israel ? May I not wash in them, and be clean ? "

How far the theorist is himself responsible for the impression he has made I do not know. The philosopher is certainly a charlatan if he puts on airs ; for no one should know better how vast is the ocean and how small is his boat. But the difference between " the ordinary," " the scientific " and " the philosophic consciousness " has been over-accentuated. After all there is only one way of knowing. All minds have the same essential structure and perform, more

or less successfully, the same functions. There is no difference between thinking and thinking, except in persistence and thoroughness. No one neglects facts —not even the philosopher : and no one takes them as they stand—not even the most sturdy member of the common-sense school. There is no *à priori* method, for there is no thinking without premisses ; and even abstractions are extracted from " facts " and from nowhere else. The philosopher is the brother of the ordinary man ; and even the latter cannot *get at " facts "* without considerable thinking ; for, unfortunately, facts are not " given " unless they are " taken " ; and if their meaning is in them, it has to be apprehended.

Furthermore, both philosophy and ordinary reflexion at any period have their roots in the same general experience. We are all alike the vehicles of traditional conceptions and social customs. Society forms us, and its beliefs and habits enter into the very constitution of our minds, long before we can react upon them in the way of criticism. So that, in truth, it is society which criticizes itself in us, producing us for that end that its wisdom may ripen through the spirits which it educates. The philosopher differs from his neighbours only in that his reaction is more deliberate and purposive. So far from deriving pre-eminence from his singularity, it can come only by his entering more fully into the common traditions. To become the teacher of his times he must learn from his times, and be their foremost pupil. He will be the more effective critic and reformer, the more ardent his discipleship. I should be inclined to estimate the value of a philosophic theory by its affinity to the general thought of its time, although sometimes it has to wait a little for recognition, especially if, like Carlyle's Sartor, it appears in a strange garb. It is a strong presupposition in favour

of a philosophic theory that it is in essential accord with the spirit of the period in which it flourishes.

There is no better indication of the value of Modern Idealism, for instance, than that it cannot pride itself upon its uniqueness. The main conceptions it would demonstrate and apply find expression in the music of our great poets; they inspire much of our religious teaching, and they are even working blindly in the practical efforts of our social reformers and statesmen. The theory of Hegel differs from that of Locke and Hume not more than the poetry of Goethe or Wordsworth from that of Pope and Swift, or the social and political life of our day from that of the age of Fielding. And it differs in the same way. The world is too intensely practical a place not to make use of great thoughts: and is not much interested in the garb of him who utters them.

If this affinity between philosophical and all other thinking were more clearly recognized its contributions would be valued more accurately. We should listen first to the reflexions which carry our own best thoughts just a stage further. We should be less confident of the value of reforms which involve violent departures from our present ways of life. We should discover, once more, that the true prophet comes not to destroy but to fulfil. The stars in their courses fight for him, because he has made out the paths they were travelling upon; and he hitches his projects to the best tendencies of his time.

Amongst the contrasts which most call for examination in these days is that between scientific or philosophic thought regarding human society, and what is called *Christian* thought. The contrast is generally drawn in favour of the latter; but I think it misleading and mischievous. It injures both, and

the latter most of all. The authority of Christianity is pledged to unripe and unsound causes, and it is implicated in social projects for which it cannot be held responsible.

The contrast runs somewhat as follows.

1. The premisses of scientific and philosophic thought when it deals with human society are regarded, quite justly, as at once the results of, and open to, inquiry: those of Christian thought are, unwisely in my opinion, attributed to a different origin and endowed with a different authority. They are supposed to be ultimate starting points rather than results, and to await application rather than verification.

2. Scientific or philosophic thought is supposed to be guided by a cold and abstract logic. It moves in the domain of the mere intellect. But Christian thought draws its material and its inspiration from the emotional and volitional depths of human nature. The experience it strives to interpret is more rich. It accepts the *nuances* of human life amongst its premisses. It is sensitive to the chromatic colours on the limiting edges of human destiny, and catches the subtle suggestions which, like the rays of the sun when not yet above the horizon, shoot upwards from the region where the finite dips down into the infinite. But Philosophy rejects what it cannot define. It forgets that there are ways to truth besides ratiocination; that the heart has its language as well as the head; and that its language is as much richer as is that of an ancient literature saturated with associations than a crabbed, commercial Volapuk.

3. It is only the language which comes from the heart that can reach the heart. It alone can change men and reform the world: for every true change is a change of heart. But science and philosophy

convict without convincing, and enlighten without illuminating. They throw a cold and unimpassioned light over the affairs of men. They help to reveal things as they are ; but they kindle no revolt against the wrongs of the world, and awaken no resolve to combat them. Reason may be the source of truth, but it is not the fount of desire. It may bring forth ideas, but it fashions no ideals. It is only a spectator in the market-place, and takes no part in the buying and selling.

Now, I am not prepared to say that these contrasts are altogether false : I do not think that any pure falsehoods go about amongst mankind. It is certain that the most mischievous falsehoods are half-truths.

1. I do not deny, for instance, that the Christian religion furnishes truths which are authoritative ; that they are adopted without examination and supposed to need no verification. But they are authoritative only because they are believed to be true. Hence they cannot suffer from examination : and if they could be *proved* they would not be less secure. The mathematician has his intuitions, he anticipates results ; but he never dreams that his intuitions are injured by demonstration, which is the discovery of the implicit premisses on which they rested. "Christian thought" cannot gain by repudiating the methods of science and the searching criticisms of philosophy on social matters : least of all in an age which has become as impatient of dogmatism in religion as it is of despotism in politics. Wherever convictions are being formed the individual judgment claims a vote ; and the period of dictation is closed. "Who knows not that Truth is strong, next to the Almighty : she needs no policies nor stratagems, nor licensings to make her victorious. These are the shifts and the defences that error uses

against her power. Give her but room, and do not bind her when she sleeps." I wonder when the Christian Church will listen to Milton, and trust her cause enough to put it quite frankly in the context of human history. For my part I think it can hold its own. I should as soon buttress mathematics or chemistry by calling it Christian Mathematics or Christian Chemistry, as cite Christianity in favour of my own social or political convictions, and speak of " Christian Socialism," or " Christian Social Science." I do not need the adjective if I am sufficiently convinced that my principles are true ; and if I am to convince my opponent I must first of all try to meet him on ground that is open and common, and after granting him the choice of weapons.

2. It is also just possible to study human society without regard to the passions and volitions from which it emanates ; and with as little purpose of reforming it as the astronomer has of changing the course of the planets. We can always have abstract thoughts and narrow ends. A statistician may find nothing in human society but things to add, subtract, and strike averages, and a political economist nothing but the production, distribution and consumption of wealth. Both men are most useful, so long as they do not take the particular aspect of social life which interests them for the complex whole of multitudinous facets, with which it sparkles in ever changing colours.

But even the statistician and the economist do not indulge in pure intellectualism, nor fail to convert their thoughts into volitions. The avenue between thought and practice is always open, and no one can close it. Men act from their *beliefs*, however much they may betray their creeds. Ideas are at once the products and the grounds of volition. They come

from purpose, and pass into purposes, as naturally as buds burst into flowers. The intellect is never "mere," or "pure"; and the charge of "Intellectualism" is only an indication of shallow psychology, and men make it only against opponents whose arguments they cannot meet. Man's spirit is no loose compound of intellectual and volitional and passionate elements, acting separately. One might as well suspect the brain of working when the heart is dead as maintain that the intellect speculates while the will and passions sleep. Not even the most abstract truth is sought without being desired or attained without the due degree of emotion. The desire for truth, for *mere* truth, is a desire for the good, and not seldom for that precise kind of good which men most need. It is the pressure of the felt need which directs the will to its intellectual research and gives it purpose. They also serve who only stand and think. And when, by much thinking upon human society a philosophy or science of its structure and laws emerges, our practical statesmanship will surely be a little less blind, its paths a little less tortuous, and its results a little less costly. Invention will follow discovery, and the regulation of human affairs will follow the comprehension of them, as surely—and with no less vast an advantage—as in the domain of natural science.

It is peculiarly inept and *mal-à-propos* to decry intellectualism, or to appeal to the emotions against the intelligence, in the field of social science. Passion is apt to be too unbridled in this sphere, and to exercise all too successfully its own destructive methods of shutting out the wide world and shutting *in* the mind amongst narrow issues and one-sided views. Passion is never wise except when it is based upon reflexion; it is always foolish when it is opposed to the intelligence.

It " can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." No political philosopher known to me has lacked passion for improving the world. He is doing the duty next to hand, only it happens that his duty is to try to think with all the power he can command ; for he believes that if men are to walk more securely it must be in a better light. It was deep love for the State and a strong desire to see it based upon foundations that endure which led Plato to conceive his ideal republic, " on the pattern of the state which is in heaven." It never dawned upon Aristotle, any more than upon Kant, that there can be *truths* which are not practical. It was his heart-weariness of the anarchy of the Civil War which led Hobbes to write his *Leviathan*, and it was his eminently practical interests which both inspired and limited the speculations of Locke regarding Civil Government. Spinoza strove to contemplate all things *sub specie æternitatis*, but he desired a better life for mankind as ardently as Rousseau, even although he did not tip his thoughts with the fire which kindles revolutions. And can any one discover cold Intellectualism in Burke, or Bentham, or Carlyle, or Mill, or Green, the latest of the great exponents of the nature of human society ?

It is a wrong to scientific men and philosophers to charge them with lack of passion in their dealings with human society ; although they have striven to prevent their own private passions from mingling amongst their premisses, setting an example we should try to follow. That they have neglected the play of human passion in human history is a charge which cannot be substantiated. Least of all can the social philosopher who deals with Western Civilization refuse to admit amongst its premisses the vast emotional power of the eternal verities of the Christian religion.

Any science or philosophy which did *that* would stand convicted of flagrant abstractness.

The wrong to Christianity that comes from distinguishing it from the deliberate reflexion and high trust in truth which animates science and philosophy, or from denying to it the use of their methods, results, and spirit, is still deeper. To withdraw its doctrines from their scrutiny is not to establish their authority but to render them suspect, and at the same time it throws the door open for any false prophet to prophesy in its name.

The contrast between Christian and scientific or philosophic thought is entirely unjustifiable. If Christianity is true it is scientifically and philosophically true. There is no such thing as "Christian thought," any more than there is Mohammedan, or Buddhist, or Parsee thought; though fortunately there is much rational thought from Christian premisses. Nor is there "Christian Science," except that which is neither Christianity nor Science. Least of all is there a Christian theory of human society, which more deserves the name of "Christian Socialism" than "Christian Individualism." Its characteristic doctrines, such as the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man, and of Love as the fulfilment of the law express the ultimate conditions of both social and individual welfare.

But it is a grave wrong to identify Christianity with any special theory of social and political life. The Christian religion is interested primarily in individual character, that is, in the direct relation of man's most sacred inner life to his God. No doubt the light of religion once kindled within will cast its rays upon the whole region of man's activities. Its supreme principles are destined, I believe, to inform and to inspire

and to sanctify the secular states of the world, so that they shall be merely secular no more. "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, *Holiness unto the Lord*; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls upon the altar. Yea every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts." But it by no means follows that these principles can express themselves, or make themselves good, in only one form of social or industrial organization; or that when they rule the world there shall be property no more, or 'masters' no more, and 'men' no more. *A living* principle can take many forms in the course of its evolution. The Christianity which can reform the world must retain its universality; and we had better not bind it down to our own political creed, or make it responsible for our social specifics and nostrums. Its business lies amongst motives. It concentrates its forces upon the citadel. Secure of the heart it is secure of the whole domain of man's nature and actions. Looking to its founder, and to his immediate disciples, I find in their teachings the minimum of social theory, and in their example the minimum of direct interest in social and political questions. Jesus of Nazareth refused to be entangled in questions of rights of property. "Man, who made me a judge, or a divider, over you?" Nor would he assist the patriot, if patriot he was, to decide whether tribute should or should not be given to Cæsar. There is as little political theory in His teachings as there is biology or astronomy; and Christian teachers should be wary, after the sharp lessons of the past, of extracting specific doctrines, socialistic or other, from a teacher who was content to let loose upon the world great principles and to let them work amongst the mass of motives and institutions, even as the leaven works.

Stung with the evils of our industrial civilization and its all too evidently tragical wrongs many good men would overturn its institutions and advocate methods of revolution. I should say to them that this cannot be done, in *the name of Christianity*; any more than can the defence of them come from Christianity. Christianity is silent as to the *forms* of social and political life. Its hope, and its task, lies neither in overturning nor in maintaining the relations which connect men in society, but in moralizing them. The method of overturn (or of defence, for that matter) is much more simple: it is always easier to deal with the outer husk than with the inner life. But such a method is not radical enough for Christianity. Its business is to change the heart. The main relations which now divide man from man, and link man to man in dividing them, giving to each his own station and duties, are probably essential to society. In any case they can be adequately changed only from within. The ordinary daily connexions by which man is bound to man in his business, in public works, in offices, in all avocations are capable of being touched to higher issues by the Christian ideal. The workshops can become schools of virtue, makers and not destroyers of men. Masters may come to care for their men, even as they care for their machines; and men for their masters even as they care for wage and short hours. Social relations are meant to be moral relations, and to be interpreted first as *duties*, and as rights only as a secondary consequence. And Christianity, it seems to me, is a witness to this cardinal fact. Silent about social machinery, leaving that to be invented little by little from age to age, it inspires men with principles too great to be bound to any fixed and final social or political form. It would not be difficult to show, I believe, that for many cen-

turies together its primary task and best influence consisted in liberating man from the world, and teaching him the worth of individuality; buying his spiritual freedom at a great price. But it was not disqualified thereby, when civilization was ripe to receive the lessons, from teaching mankind the opposite aspect of the same truth, namely that spiritual life consists not in freedom from the world, but in freedom *in* a world saturated with a spiritual meaning. Christianity has helped to destroy empires; for it was no doubt responsible in great part for the decline and fall of Rome, detaching from its service men capable of generous aims and contemning all secular interests. It is destined yet to help to build empires on a surer foundation, and to come to a truer sense of its own significance in doing so. But it was never a political or social theory. Indeed, at no period in their history have the Hebrew people differed from other Eastern nations in the crudeness of their social and political conceptions. We owe our conceptions of citizenship to Greece and Rome, not less conspicuously than we owe the inspiration of personal religion to the Hebrews. And if I confess readily that the personal religion which is adequate to the Christian idea must ultimately express itself in the free institutions of moralized states, I must insist on the other hand that without the testimony to the value of such institutions which came from other peoples than the Hebrews, personal religion was impossible. If perfect citizens imply a perfect state: a perfect state no less implies perfect citizens; and state and citizen move towards perfection *pari passu*.

I cannot give priority to either, for neither can attain its best except through the other. And having been freed from the narrow conception of history which

made only selected bits of it sacred, and from the distressing view of a God who was a Father to one Child amongst the nations, and a Step-father to all the others on His hearth, I am not able to fall back upon a less generous creed. Christianity cannot gain by isolation, nor does the preeminence of its religious and moral revelation rest upon the impotence or worthlessness of a social environment which was not of its creation.

" The Christian ideal," it is said, " and the influences of Christian thought and faith have elevated and penetrated scientific and philosophic thought respecting human society, and scientific and philosophic thought can concur with, encourage and strengthen the aspirations and activities of the Christian Church." This is quite true. That the dynamic power which moves the world lies concentrated in ideals is a truth which neither individuals nor nations can lay too much to heart. And the religious ideal is the most potent of them all ; for in it is concentrated all the others. The *object* of religion, whom we call God, stands at all times for the best conception we can form of a perfection that is in no wise limited. The *exercise* of religion is life in *direct relation* to this perfection : life in God, through God, for God. In this light and context, regarded *sub specie æternitatis*, ideas and desires are placed in their true perspective. We come to see what is great and what is little, what is well worth doing and better let alone. So that the religious ideal is the dominant lord of a good life. It is impossible to attribute too much value to the ideals of Christianity.

But ideals do not come out upon the world in full potency, as Minerva sprang from the head of Jove. They are practical hypotheses that gain as well as give meaning in being applied. To know what the Christian

principle of love means we must live the life of love. It is in doing the will of God that man learns the doctrine. If at every step in its advance human society must be guided by the ideals of the Founder of Christianity, these ideals themselves in order to acquire their meaning need the expanding forms of secular civilization. We confess only a part of the truth if we speak of these ideals as " penetrating and elevating scientific and philosophic thought respecting human society." Such a statement implies that the ideals have stood fixed in their perfection from the first, and that science and philosophy can only concur and substantiate them. No ideals have such fixity, and philosophy can have no dogmatic kernel. If Christian truth is to rank first for philosophy, philosophy must discover its primacy from its truth. Philosophy may find that in " Him " all things consist, but it cannot presume it. The world has already rejected the formula of *Credo ut intelligam,* in favour of the formula of intellectual freedom, *Intelligo ut credam.* Philosophy must treat Christianity, even in its ideals, as part of the warp and woof of human history, and subject it in all ways to the laws of its development. And those whose faith in Christianity is full and without flaw will welcome the inquiry. There is no testimony better worth obtaining than that of the impartial witness, except that of the unwilling witness.

The splendour of the Christian ideals lies in the greatness of their promise. The conception of the Fatherhood of God is meant, I believe, to emancipate nature from the bonds of mere naturalism. There are explosive utterances in the New Testament which are prophetic of the complete dominion of spirit over nature. " Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things

shall be added unto you" : for there is no rift, or inconsequence between the moral order and the natural. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." "All things are yours for ye are Christ's." "Be ye of good cheer for I have overcome the world." "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." "If God be for us, who can be against us?" asks St. Paul, and the question leads to the magnificent challenge of all the powers, and the confidence that in all these things we are "more than conquerors." The spirit of Christianity at its highest is inconsistent with the view that the victory of spirit is to be partial, and that "Nature" can remain an exception to the benevolent purposes of a benevolent will which can neither fail nor falter.

But the deeper meanings of such utterances are lost to the world till it has experienced the *life* that reveals it. A little child may understand in his way that the Lord is his shepherd, and that he shall not want ; but his understanding of it is not what it can be, if he can say it after a long life during which he has often strayed in the wilderness, known the pathos of sins forgiven, become saturated with the sense of his weakness and ill-desert, and lonely after many bereavements. In a similar way the free enterprise of science and philosophy has been necessary to lift the veil of naturalism from the face of nature. For the deists of the eighteenth century it was "a brass eight-day clock set going long ago," with its author looking at it and not interfering, except at times miraculously to move the hands : for Arnold, and how many more, in our own day, it is a monstrous mechanism indifferent to the moral fate of man, never curbing its pride "to give his

virtues room" : to Professor Huxley it was a Macrocosm pitted *against* the Mikrocosm, not even indifferent, but biased against the good, encouraging with its rewards of food and drink and life and pleasure, the greedy maw and the brute powers which win the battle in "the struggle for existence," and by no means the qualities of meekness and lowliness, and patience and loving-kindness. To meet such views, to make good the Christian conception of a dominion of love which is universal and knows no shallows or shores, we require the poet and philosopher ; so that to Goethe nature might be the transparent vesture of divinity ; to Carlyle the region of the *Natural* super-natural ; to Wordsworth a world interfused with a Presence

> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns . . .
> A motion and a spirit that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought.

If the conception is native to Christianity from the first, the labour of many ages has been needed to bring forth the poets and philosophers who could discern its significance. Nor is the truth made out yet. It is still a vision to the poet and a hypothesis—the sanest he knows—for the philosopher. The principle of the spirituality of nature is meant to be like the ocean "whose waters cover the sea" ; but the tide is not yet full, and the waters have not as yet crept up the creeks. Spirit, says Wordsworth,

> Knows no insulated spot,
> No chasm, no solitude, but
> From link to link
> It circulates, the soul of all the world.

There are Christians who cannot say this, for fear of Pantheism. They know no better way of leaving room for man than by excluding God. And science has to

come in to support the visions of the poet, the hope of religious faith and the anticipations of the philosopher. It *is* coming in : it is experiencing, not the untruth, but the insufficiency of its mechanical categories ; and in its own slow, patient spirit, indurated by its habit of meeting hard facts face to face, it is pointing to the need of the conception of final ends, aware of the relation of nature to mind, and materialistic no more.

It is the same service that is being slowly done by science and philosophy in regard to human society. I have no doubt that the single principle of Christian Love is adequate to the needs of man, whether as individual, or as forming with his fellows the multiform social institutions which are the fullest exposition of his nature. But it needs experience, and reflexion upon experience to lead out its contents. Nothing is truly learnt except by experiencing it. The thought must become a will, and the will a deed. To seek to learn morality by rote, a religion by means of doctrine and nothing more, is as futile as to try to learn carpentry without handling tools. *Our real knowledge coincides with our real life.* Indeed, moral and religious principles may become trite and stale if they are much talked about before experience comes to give their meaning reality. There are people from whose tongues moral saws and religious maxims come all too trippingly, souls made dull of hearing with *talk* that makes the things of the Spirit cheap, who will hardly feel the power of truths made trite. This is what makes the times of religious revival, and the use of the methods of revival so doubtful, or at least, so mixed, in their influence. They aim at the emotions, and sometimes exhaust them on emptiness. There are spirits which will hardly bear bud and leaf any more ; for the flame of emotion has passed over them and they stand seared, like

trees after a forest fire. This is also what makes the oral teaching of morality and religion in schools so difficult and even so dangerous an enterprise. Spiritual ideals must be the immediate prelude to, nay must straightway pass into action. It is not enough that fine sentiments should be engendered, for we are not mere spectators at a play. The doctrine cannot be divorced from the doing, nor the life of the Church from that of the world.

Once more, we thus arrive at the need of placing the Christian ideals frankly in the context of the ordinary world, claiming for them no privilege, or aloofness, using no stratagems, but trusting to the power of their truth. Science and philosophy must be left absolutely free to inquire, and the world must be given ample scope to test by actual experience the value of its practical ideals. It must exhaust their abstract aspects one by one, be stung by the falsehood of half-truths, and driven from one imperfect rendering after another of the Good it seeks, defining its visions as it gains a less distant view of its goal. One form of civilization after another has to be tried ; social institutions must be set up and pulled down again in endless series ; the tribal community must become the civic state, and the civic state a nation and an empire, and nations and empires must be bound together more and more intimately in mutual dependence and usefulness. *Status* must pass into contract, and contract into a unity of spirit deeper than any contract. The rule of one must become the rule of the few, and the rule of the few the rule of the many and of all ; until there is attained the service which is perfect freedom and the freedom which is loyal obedience. And the spirit which animates the successive social forms must change step by step with the forms themselves, for it cannot live except

in the body which it has itself built up little by little from its environment. Indeed, the military state implies the military spirit in its members; and the industrial state is the index, nay, the natural and inevitable expression, of minds set first upon material good. A socialist state, even were it to be brought forth with all the ideal perfection of machinery that enthusiasts could desire, would be for citizens prone to assert their "rights" rather than to recognize their "duties," only a more powerful and destructive weapon for individualism. Ideals can live only in the medium of their own atmosphere.

I have already said that philosophy appears when some form of civilization has grown old. Ages of reflexion are not, as a rule, times of great enterprise. We are spurred into thinking, the psychologists tell us, when we discover that appearances are false, that we have been harbouring illusions and contradictions. We reflect when we find ourselves in trouble. Old traditions have turned out false, old formulae in political and religious life have become inadequate. We are not at peace, our life is divided against itself, and we know not why. It is at such times that philosophy finds its supreme function—and with it, always, poetry if they are both at their best. By its reflexion it accentuates the contradictions which irk and pain the ordinary consciousness, it knows not why. It discovers the seat of the disease.

> He took the suffering human race,
> He read each wound, each weakness clear,
> And struck his finger on the place,
> And said: *Thou ailest here, and here!*

Sometimes, though by no means always, it discovers the truth which underlies, or rather which is implicitly

present in the contradicting elements and points out the remedy as well as the disease.

The primary function of philosophy is to be a witness to the unity of the world and the wholeness of life. But the task it first performs in exercising its function is that of criticism. It exposes the inadequacy of the principles which the working world has adopted, it knows not whence, nor why. It traces back its unrest, its doubts and its bewilderment to these ideal causes ; for in the world of human action there are no causes *except* ideals. It shows, in the last resort, that human ills, social and individual, come from man's ignorance of himself. For ages together abstract and misleading conceptions of the nature of the individual and of society have been entertained, and have ruled men all the more despotically because they had not thought about them. Individuality seemed to mean independence ; personality to rest on exclusion and to have uniqueness and particularity as its essence ; freedom to be isolation and detachment ; society to be an artificial convention that limited individuality and hindered freedom ; and social functions to be merely negative and regulative and therefore to be reduced to a minimum. Led by such conceptions, for the world always follows *them,* we find a nation striving to cast away its customs and traditions. It would be without social conventions, a " Nation of Sanscullotes " " free ", beginning the world over again at the " Year One." But the attainment of such freedom is found to be somehow the attainment of what was not wanted after all. A great price has been paid for a false good. Then reflexion, aided by circumstance, philosophy taught by the world (and by no means always wearing the philosopher's garb) comes in to explain. We have Lessing and Goethe, Kant

and Hegel at war with the ancient dualisms, which set man against the world, nature against Spirit, the citizen against the State and the State against Society. An exclusive personality is found to be empty ; negative freedom to be mere impotence, for one can do nothing *against* the world, but with it. Society is bound not to be artificial, or alien ; not a limit nor a hindrance to the individual, but the very *stuff* of the individuality of its citizens. Bentham yields to Mill and Mill to Carlyle (whom we have not done with), and Green. Little by little philosophy, aided by the poets, is teaching the implication of man in mankind, of mankind in man, and of nature in both.

This, I conceive, is the task on which at the present day the scientific and philosophic thought regarding human society is engaged. It is making good gradually, painfully and against much resistance, the practical validity of this conception of the mutual implication of man with mankind. It is helping men, not so much by constructing plans of an ideal society as by indicating the causes of the unrest of our present practical social life. It takes up social life as it finds it, and is endeavouring to bring into explicit view its implicit better thoughts—"helping Nature," as wise physicians do, to medicate its own evils.

It finds men aware, as they never were before, of their need of one another. They know that Society is like a machine, whose parts are necessary, and must fit into one another. Labour knows that it needs Capital, and Capital that it needs Labour. But, as a machine works under the law of stress and strain, every wheel turning round by friction against its neighbours which turn in the opposite direction, so do Labour and Capital, each fortifying itself within itself by means of unions and combinations, strive with much friction and

mutual loss against the other. Philosophy points to a better conception, and indicates that the stress and strain of a machine might conceivably pass into organic co-operation. We have states in need of each other, not one of them willing to be shut out of the world's mart, but fully aware that to prosper it must trade in the open market. Yet they would fain sell and not buy, seeking their own good by hindering others, and restoring the methods of mechanism! Philosophy tries to point out that such projects have to reckon with the nature of things, and that the nature of things prescribes the better method of organic unity, a community of enterprise and participation in a good which is greater for each because it is common to all.

There is a sense in which the service of scientific and philosophic thought is humble enough. It is in a manner of speaking only endeavouring to substitute one metaphor for another—that of society as an organism for society as a machine. It is bearing witness only to a hoary truth; for who does not confess that every real good is a common good, and selfishness but stupidity, not meant to prosper.

But it is one thing to recognize a principle and another to follow out its consequences. There is nothing in all mathematics except the addition of one to one, or the subtraction of one from one. The crudest mathematician can do no less nor the greatest more; and yet they differ. So is it with regard to the ideal aims of human society. It is one thing to admit their abstract truth, and another to trace their way of operation and to increase their power within the actual structure of human society as it stands at this hour; and to make men *see* that the individualism which is the assertion of a self that is exclusive, and industrialism which is the pursuit of a good that we are *unwilling*

to be a common good, is neither good theory nor successful practice.

We are slow to realize that the individual's own substance is social, and that if in any way he thrusts society from him, he is "tearing his own vitals." Our recognition of this truth is blind, as of a man who holds a treasure in his hands and is not aware of its worth. It is plain enough to the seller of goods that if he is to prosper he must persuade his fellows of his use to them. Does he not advertise to the whole world that he is seeking their good, selling them the best goods at the lowest prices? The rewards of society are evidently intended to pay for services. Let the individual but supply *its* needs, perform in the niche of his station the services it wants, and he will find, on the whole, that society will ask and pay him for a larger service. Even as things are, the world insists somewhat punctiliously that the man who performs his duties well will get his rights.

But plain as this truth is—plain as that one plus one makes two—it is difficult to follow it in its application. And in consequence we see men on all hands claiming their rights on quite other grounds than the performance of their duties. I do not find myself compelled to admit that the change from the military to the industrial organization is merely the substitution of an "Age of Greed" for an "Age of Violence." But there is much truth in the view that for whole classes of men "the defence of personal rights in an indifferent or hostile world is the first canon of duty. Till this canon is satisfied, all else must be deferred. The moral type which emerges, approved and enticing, is one in which integrity is at least nominally honoured, and justice is not nominally ignored, but in which alertness and prudence, energy and practical judgment, point the

way to victory, while mercy, humility, indifference to personal gain, exercised otherwise than as an indulgence supplementary to the serious business of life, spell social failure and breed contempt." [1]

Our very remedies too often imply that we are still in the toils of the fallacy that our own good can come only by the assertion of it against the good of others. To do good to others it is held we must renounce our own ; our own and that of others being incompatible ! " What if the times were ripe for the sacrifice of individual rights to a wider good ? " asks the Socialist. " Now that democracy is for the first time coming to its own, does it not whisper in our ear a new possibility —a social organization in which equality of opportunity shall be created by the deliberate surrender of private privilege." [2]

" Not so ! " protest Science and philosophy, if I comprehend their meaning. The social and the individual good, *not* being incompatible, the individual is asked to give up nothing worth holding. It is not negation but dedication which the times demand ; not the overturn of institutions by " a democracy come to its own," but the better interpretation of their ideal meaning and the transformation of them from within.

Let me try to explain. A man's rights are things he can justly demand from some one ; that is, his rights against his fellows are their duties to him, and similarly his duties to them are their rights against him. The master's rights against his men are their duties to him ; their rights against him are his duties to them. Abolish duties and no rights remain. Duties and

[1] *Hibbert Journal*, January 1909, pp. 317, 318. A most excellent article.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 324.

rights are two names for the same things. But it makes the greatest difference which of the two conceptions we habitually employ: whether we seek our rights by doing our duty, or claim our rights apart from service. The spirit which does the latter is egoistic and unsocial, whatever may be the forms of government or industrial production which it employs; on the other hand, there is hardly any social structure that the former spirit could not inspire to new usefulness and lift to a higher power. I am not contending that the external body does not matter, or that the spirit within is indifferent to the social environment without: but I am maintaining that a community whose spirit remains egoistic, while "democracy" exerts its power and changes the machinery of the state, will have gained nothing by the change except more efficient weapons for a more universal greed.

I do not think *that* is the "Socialism" which Socialists desire. But it is very much what the demos is taught. Compared with the emphasis laid upon rights and privileges in these times, whether we are protecting those we possess or seeking those which we do not, little is said of the duties. "The sure growth of the working people in class-consciousness, and their entrance on political power, the consideration of industry, the spread of social compunction—all point the same way. Apparently the great changes that are coming will divide the future order from the present as widely as we are divided from the feudal system."[1] Hence, concludes the writer, "It would certainly do no harm to prepare ourselves, and yet more our children, for these probably imminent and drastic changes. We might well resume a somewhat

[1] *Hibbert Journal*, January, 1909, p. 319.

discredited pursuit—the culture and training of the interior life from a new point of view."

There never was a time in the history of the world when the inner life of a people was not to some extent at war with its outward order, except in stagnant communities. But the contradiction between them was never so tragical or so monstrous as would exist in a state whose political and industrial order demanded of its members a clear consciousness of their own duties and of the rights of others, and found in them only the consciousness of their own rights and of the duties of others. Nor do I think such a "drastic change" is "imminent"; though I confess that many men seem to be more eager nowadays to live *on* the State than to live *for* the State. Bankruptcy lies that way, as we all see clearly; hence the poorer classes object to the wealth of the rich, and the rich to the few shillings a week of pension to men and women over seventy. The view seems to be gaining ground that the State is really a charitable institution, on whose resources each class, and each townlet, must draw as much as it can, putting as many of its causes on the local rates as cannot be put on the imperial taxes and asking the Government to protect its industry; while the Chancellor of the Exchequer stands alone for economy amongst the warring claims, like *Athanasius contra mundum.*

Of course such a condition of things cannot last; neither a state nor aught else can exist in virtue merely of the forces of repulsion. But this does not secure the world against attempting it. States, like individuals, get into the rapids without intending to shoot the falls. And indubitably a Socialism which has no cry upon its lips except the *Rights* of the democracy is only assisting Individualism to bring about the catastrophe. And it is just possible that there is no way of learning the

evils of egoism except by exhausting the possibilities of it and giving universal greed universal power.

But it is not likely. The acquisition of power generally teaches the use of it. What every one fears does not come. The vision of the evils of the greed of others helps us to understand our own. "History is didactic." The world is a peripatetic school, learning wisdom as it goes. And I can imagine a time coming, and coming all the sooner for the triumphs of democracy, when men will learn to consider more gravely the social incidence of their actions. The science and philosophy of these modern times is certainly engaged precisely on making this more clear. It is socializing morals; and it would moralize politics. For what other cardinal doctrine has it to teach except this immanence of the whole in every part, and the essential implication of every life in every other? And it is helped in its task by the very consolidation of industry. The growth of industrial organizations, the violence of the shocks which threaten the stability of the whole state when these organizations clash, the consciousness of the need of the sense of responsibility within a democracy, when all outward checks are abolished and there can be no restraint at all if the democracy does not restrain itself,—all these things will help the social philosopher as he insists that the State is, was, and always must be, based on the consciousness of duty rather than of rights. And I look forward to a time when the Church, having learnt to trust in the virtue of the ideals of Christianity, shall seek their authority in themselves, and their meaning in the expanding civilization of mankind. The geometrician does not care much who Euclid was, nor the devout soul who wrote the Psalm cxix. Truths for all time are independent of *every* time—spiritual truths most of all. If

"Christian Socialism" is to save the world, it will save it because the structure of society implies it. And I would have Christian teachers find the power of their ideals in the nature of things, guide the world not in the costume of authority but in hodden grey, and not implicate their Master in their temporary schemes. The Christian ideals will right themselves after every trial, provided they are trusted. The time is coming, I believe, when the Church will be found "standing without at the sepulchre weeping": "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." For doubt is to be deep, and the things of the Spirit alone will be hearkened unto, as they bear witness to themselves. But if the Church will only cease to seek the living among the dead, it will recognize its Founder by His voice, and, turning itself, will say unto him, "Rabboni."

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